

# THE DIAL

FEBRUARY 1929

## FROM OUTSIDE

BY KENNETH BURKE

### THE UNCOMPLETED VISIT

Passed through the tunnelled length of corridor,  
Mounted the shaft of squarely winding stairs.  
(With each new floor ascended he could peer  
Down the dark well upon his increased absence,  
While episodes of undistinguished sound  
Grew into words or footsteps, purposes  
Unseen, and after having been such, faded.)  
Slowly, he said, I rise above the street—  
Until he stood beneath the milky dawn  
Of an internal, sunless, angled sky,  
Stood there and waited, asking—should he knock.

*"Open!" noises everywhere,  
Floor noise, sink noise, noise of breathing.  
How my ears are seething  
In this empty air.*

*Snide, Snort, Broomstick and all  
Answer my silent call.*

There stood waiting. . . . Had the general hum  
Risen and fallen to a common pulse,  
He could have called this place a bog, quaking  
With life, made cheap by multitude, and nameless.

## THEIR PREFERABLE WAYS

Out of their casual speech and unsought meetings,  
 Out of much unintended deprecation,  
 Arose a day of subterfuge, a fiction  
 To bridge the distance of acquaintanceship.

Walking, they found it pleasant to assume  
 That she through blindness was in need of guidance,  
 And he might lead her with authority,  
 Piloting her to some familiar spot  
 Made new to them by being come upon  
 In such an unaccustomed manner. When  
 After their various ludicrous mistakes  
 They stumblingly arrived, she fell inert,  
 Less out of weariness than pedantry.

He altered his conceit: "Blind thing," he said,  
 "You are a bundle dropped among these woods.  
 Now, worse than blind: will-less, inanimate,  
 You lie upon this alien ground, a Bundle."

Musing aloud, he chose to speculate  
 Why such a bundle lay there, bringing forth  
 Gallant conjectures, dismissed gallantly.  
 "A madman left this Bundle; no one else,  
 Though under fright or planning to return,  
 Would risk this possibility of loss."

So logical a man would next enquire  
 What valuables the bundle might contain,  
 And from its rich appearance hope to find  
 "Such goods as in their way are sweet as the  
 Faint sound of distant revelry and music."

But how unloose this Bundle? Would it not  
 "Protect itself by wielding of a spell  
 Whereby, if I should venture to approach,  
 I should be struck down, palsied and afire?"

The game was graced with one more regulation,  
 Requiring that the bundle should convey

Some sign to him by manners known to bundles.  
Did he but lightly touch the hair, no more,  
Only the hair, and if the bundle gave  
Consent, then let it stir itself in answer.

"It yields! Observe the head at this  
Slight pressure turning. Miracle of nature—  
That I am here. A double miracle—  
That I am here and Bundle should have spoken!"

#### THE METAPHOR OF JACK IN THE BANDBOX

There is a little box, light to the touch,  
Its sides and cover painted red and gold,  
With shapes designed to entertain the eye,  
But emblems once of blasphemy and magic.

The cover of this box is made secure  
By a small catch of wire which, when released,  
Permits the lid to open with a snap  
And lo!—spring-driven, pops a villainous head,  
Parading his lewd presence here among us.

How would it constitute a breach of love,  
Were one hour given to other arms?  
It would not bring you reason to suspect  
That even one small corner of her mind  
Had been attacked by fester; that her smile,  
Laid over you at parting, as the lock  
Snapped into place behind you, ever froze  
With treacherous imagery. Not even while  
The sluices of your blood first swelled and knocked,  
Could you compound an anodyne of slander,  
Unable through your memory of her sweetness,  
To steel yourself against this loss by hating.

#### CONCLUSION

If I had more than visited—I came,  
And fearing sufferance, crept away again;  
Turned and went down the steps—and were the air  
Some heavy, sluggish liquid thing in which

Our breathing takes on shape and colour, I  
Should have retraced the fog of my own coming,  
With choice of any course I might prefer,  
Free to take east or west or north or south,  
Or any of the subtleties of such.

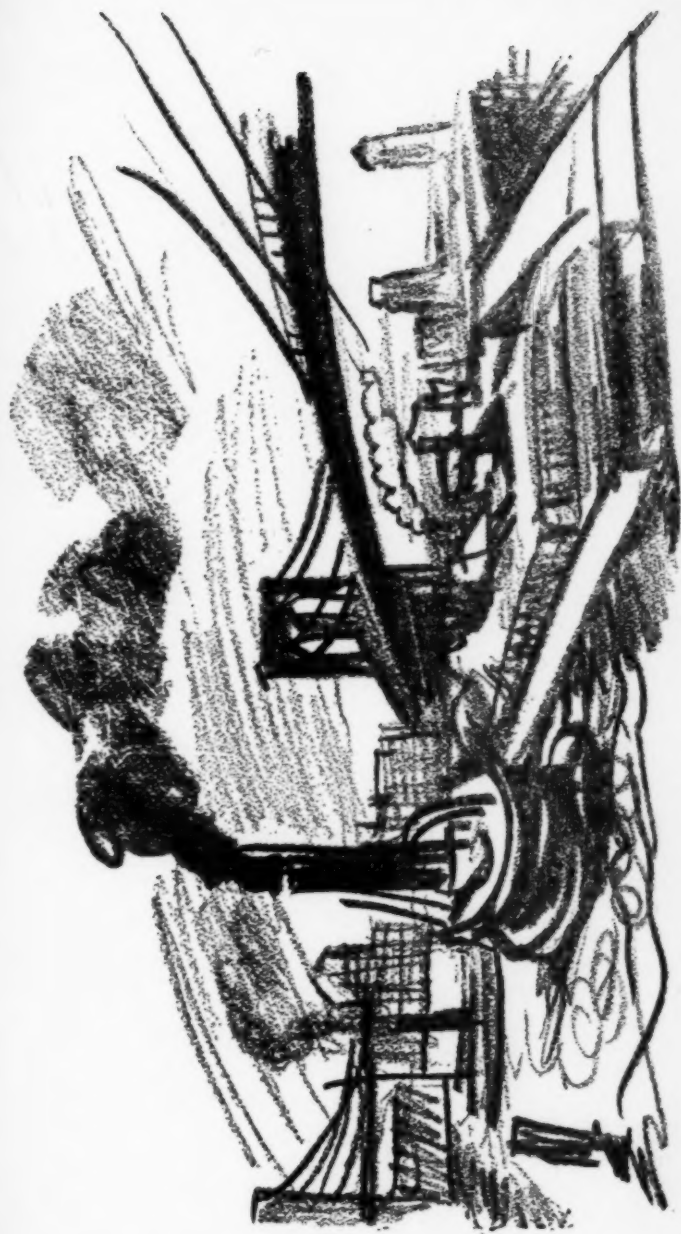
Here was a failing corner of myself,  
Offered to you before the world and I  
Had cut it from me—vestige of such doubts  
As those must quell who, meeting fear, can say:  
“Out fear—we are not paid to fear.”

Now, lest the trumpet of the dawn blare forth  
Unheeded, I affirmatively rise,  
Whistle my dog, and make off up the hill—  
Finding thereby some method to forget  
What dismal mock-economy this is:  
That in scant years out of eternity  
One sees his nearest step to happiness  
In contemplation of another's splendour.

Is there some vast and melancholy place  
Where, as explorers in the Arctic sun  
Behold huge transcripts of their bodies cast  
In shadow on the clouds, perceiving there  
Each move transmogrified into its own  
Enormous replica, so we could find  
The distant repetition of ourselves  
In magnified comparison?

Such sudden region is the realm of art—  
And as the day dissolves in nightfall, note  
How we must enter shivering from the mist,  
And find the match by touch, and light the lamp,  
And shed the silent downpour on the desk  
To dissipate the evening's tyranny—  
Affording that one thing which man has added:  
The articulate, analytic sound.  
Welcome! . . . Here again. . . . Here I am back—





TUGS. BY CARL SPRINCHORN

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## FIGHT NIGHTS AT THE ARMORY A. A.

BY ROBERT ALDEN SANBORN

### I

ONCE a week in the winter the Grand Opera House becomes the Armory Athletic Association. The ring is built on the stage—up to the footlights. On the sides and back of the stage, slightly elevated one above the other on a graded platform, rise eight or ten rows of chairs. I sat in the front row on the floor of the stage, looking straight between the ropes, across the footlights, and on and up the blurred ashy-blue coast of the house, ribbed twice with hanging balconies, and spotted with faces, dabs of pasty pink. At first I felt myself an unwilling centre of attraction, but gradually became aware that I was not discovered. The ring, when filled with action, effectually hid me.

I could have rested my feet quite comfortably on the lowest of the three ropes had I not considered that Larry Conley, the referee, might object. I have a liking and respect for Larry. I should not care to give him concern, nor to invite the effect of that concern upon myself. Larry's manner in the ring is austere; as though that were his sanctuary.

He seems alone with the conscience that goes with him into the ring. Sitting between rounds on the lowest rope, the one I did not dare to use for my own comfort, he looks down with grave tired eyes and pale cheeks. But the instant one speaks his name and the note of sympathy is brought to him, his smile is as quick as the lift of his head.

Last night he got paler as the bouts waxed warm and burst out in jagged flares of fury. His eyes turned white with anxiety, his lips quivered. He shifted about, light as a collie, was in one place and winked into another, crouched to look under and up into the always doubtful in-fighting, sprang to unlock the arms and pry apart the heaving shoulders, speaking in a gentle confidential tone: "Come, boys, break—do it yourselves for once—don't make me do it every time."

Surely Paddy Owens was not as right as Kid Labore. Paddy is built not unlike one of the Armory's favourites, young Shaver of the O'Brien clan, in that he has yet to acquire the packages of muscle that will fill out a framework of spidery steel. Shaver is different in this way, he has some of the padding, but lacks the moulding touches that produce perfect symmetry. Both Paddy and Shaver might study Kid Labore covetously. Labore's body was the finest fruit on the tree last night. And it was with this perfect proportion of muscle that he beat Owens.

Paddy had the insolent manner of a boy on stilts; the Kid fought with a cherry-red enthusiasm and wore wings on his shoulders, and wings beat stilts any day. Paddy jabbed until he lost his judgement and confidence and admitted the rushing Labore to his secondary defence. From then on he spat blood between rounds. Paddy twined himself around the Kid, he was so much taller that his head and shoulders folded, ivy-wise, over the sturdy shapely form of his opponent.

The truth may be that the referee won this fight for Labore a week ago when he slipped a decision to Owens that the latter must have realized he did not deserve. The sting of the injustice carried the Kid up to the highest pitch of his fighting ability, it tempered his wits to a biting edge on the attack, to a resilient toughness on the defence. On the contrary, a success he knew he had not earned shot Paddy up into the air and he could not overcome the embarrassment of the awkward position. He was up against a psychological boomerang.

The swing of Maffit Flaherty's grey-sweatered arm toward Labore's corner was the signal for a delightful piece of acrobatics. Up shot the Kid with a flex of his snaky muscles, skimmed across the ring nose into the air three feet off the ground, and came down with both hands on Paddy's shoulders, almost leap-frogging the beaten man. With a sheepish grin Paddy looked up, fumbled for the eager hand of his foe, and turned away, chagrined but resigned. Then whisking away from Paddy, the Kid flashed back to his corner as though the distance were the finish of a dash, seized the ropes and bounded over like a leaping salmon.

In another moment, Terry Brooks, grim-jawed and black-haired, stood in the ring, wrapped in a weathered red dressing-gown, his pink-shirted, plaid-capped seconds and handlers swarming about

him. On his heels came Joe Connolley, lounging under the ropes as ponderously as a hippopotamus dragging his bulk out of a muddy pond. During the perfunctory overtures, rumbling machines of loyalty jarred the balconies. The red walls turned the red waves back, the blanket of blue smoke heaved with undulating muscles of enthusiasm. A small but solid nationality marched behind each champion, and shot its wrath through the veins of one fighting man upon the other.

The clang of the bell released volcanic breaths; red flames blew from muscled torsos. Connolley descended on Brooks as if Jove dismounting from a cloud to obliterate an impertinent offender. Fifteen pounds' more weight and a few inches of height gave Joe the appearance of a great lumbering juggernaut beside the trim Terry. Joe's godlike aspect fell to the floor and was kicked aside. He now appeared in the role of an irate washerwoman belabouring an incorrigible child. Then that part scaled into the wings, he became a murderously enraged wood-chopper, inflamed by a sharp twig snapping in his face, now hacking at the butt, slashing as high as he could reach, making chips shoot like sparks, and never getting nearer to felling the tree. Then, a bungling headsman, his pride stung as the first stroke glances from the skull, raining random blows upon the bowed head and shoulders.

And Terry just smiled. He smiled as a man smiles who knows his turn is coming. He lowered his head to the storm and the edges of chunky gloves beat upon the back of his neck. And grinning through this hail of snowballs packed with coal came Terry with death in either hand.

In the third round he shook his head, cleared his storm-wracked brain, whipped his right over, and landed—CRASH! Joe fell with a thud on one knee, looked up bewildered, and rose very carefully. From that time on he fought without much joy.

## II

The gallery roared like a den of wolves last night. The bars twanged with the snarl of appetites within. If the mouthings of the beasts had been articulated they would have come forth in phrases such as: "Raw meat! Bloody meat! Chops with gristle!"

Hitherto I have written tolerantly about the fight fan. I have

tried to explain him and to extenuate his tastes. And he has so far made it easy for me by keeping within bounds of what is accepted as good behaviour. But last night I sickened of him. I could have heartily enjoyed turning a machine-gun on him. I took pleasure in recalling the historic picture of Napoleon mowing down the rabble with his veteran guns in the square before the palace, and for the French populace I substituted the gallery crowd of the Grand Opera House.

There is a primitive instinct in all of us that impels us to fight fire with fire, blood with blood. Is there a germ of justice at the root of it? Or is it simply an infection? I only can tell that it infuriates me to see thumbs turned down and to hear the death-rattle in men's throats in celebration of the ravenous fury of a "one-two" slugger pounding some stunned and helpless boy.

Not all the blame for this night's bloody entertainment can be put on the shoulders of "Ivy" Lewis, the matchmaker of the club. For had he asked Sammy White what he thought of "Flash" Rogers, no doubt the former would have sneered a reply, such as: "Sure I can knock him out, the big bum!" And Joe Camp might have said of Joe Sullivan: "Huh! that feller! He's nothing but a 'one-two' guy. I can lick him with my left."

Flash Rogers crawled into the slaughter pen with a towel thrown across his naked shoulders. Fine shoulders has Flash; golden-brown and ominously ribbed under the tan satin skin. Sammy White slid modestly into the ring like a nice innocent little boy coming over for a morning's play. But when the hammer fell on the gong, Flash fell on Sammy. It is not a nice picture, that of a poor kid beaten from the start. There is nothing beautiful about it, no judgement, no subtle leap of brain, no fine balance of footwork and play of hand—nothing but a swarming vicious man pounding a steak. There came in the third round the one merciful blow, a crunching uppercut. Flat on his back fell Sammy, his mouth a scarlet streak, his hair streaming. Rogers with a scornful smile turned back to his corner.

Maybe Joe Camp did think he could lick the other Joe. He began that way. In no time at all Sullivan's face blushed with bruises. Camp strips like a cross between a gorilla and a kangaroo. His legs are long and sprawling, their spring seems to span the ring. On top the rugged breadth of shoulders rests a little knob

capped with a bristling pompadour. His thinking apparatus is too far away and lacks room. The more he hurt Sullivan, the more the latter smouldered.

The buzzards in the gallery swooped down with a thunderous beat of wings in the second round. They had smelled the death promptly. Joe Camp was balanced miserably on benumbed legs and tumbled forward for Sullivan's neck when he saw him coming in. Sullivan was either too tired himself, or too stupid, to finish the job then and there. Camp groped like a ghost in the third, feebly haunting the scene of his demise. Sullivan petulantly pushed him away, but could not measure the distance with his dull brain. In the fifth, that "one-two" fire hit something soft. Camp doubled in the middle and dropped to his knees. He tottered to his feet, tired and sick, his small round head rolled from side to side. I turned away and when I faced the ring again they were gone.

Laurels to Joe Eagan for his deft and graceful skill in the final bout. There is not much room within the ropes for grace and deftness to play, still less when crowded with the slashing charges of a Mike O'Dowd. More honour to Joe, since less than a year ago Mike knocked him out.

O'Dowd is a man who wastes no time boxing but goes forth to buck the line for a score, no matter at which end of the field the ball is put in play. Larry Conley halted the bout more than once to remind Mike that hacking the other fellow's head off with the edge of the glove is not art. At which Joe Eagan passed his foe an encouraging smile.

As a boxer O'Dowd is a splendid type of the rushing fullback. Against this brawny style, Eagan's subtle counters would seem to do no great harm. Some fans tire of Joe's sidling, crouching retreats, his head bowing to the storm, his rebounds into the open, his studied evasions. But watch him closely on the retreat or under cover. See how that left hand springs up, curves out, as his head bends to the right and his right shoulder sinks into O'Dowd's left breast. Note Mike's baffled scowl as Joe's glove meets the jawbone and Mike's head is jarred back. Also observe that as the left swings out, Mike is coming in full-tilt, adding power to the counter blow. Further, note that the curving arm stiffens suddenly, at the precise moment that Mike's face crowds the glove, and then follow



down Joe's crouching body to the braced right leg. There is brain quicksilvering every play.

Joe's right arm came up twice when the *mêlée* was over, once when Larry Conley lifted it officially, and again when Joe flung it upward in his joy.

### III

There are two homely pleasures of life that little enough remark is made about. They are getting away from home, whatever or whoever it is, and coming back again. The last time I went out of the Armory A. A. I was glad enough to go. But the next Tuesday evening but one I returned. I stood in the lobby, my ears rocked by harsh hails and laughter, jostled by lads hustling for the front rows in the gallery, and while I waited and observed, a small compact young chap moved up beside me and squared his shoulders. Someone called him "Joe." Then I knew who he was, he was Joe Morgan, and he would meet Britt in the main bout.

No one wished me good-luck as I passed in. But what did I care? I had it. I was at home in my club. I looked down the slant of empty seats, filling one by one with shuffling, bending figures that stopped and turned and spoke; my eyes rested on the flare of shameless pink where an aisle-light struck on the wall, on the milky-grey strata of smoke that thickened in the mirrors running down the sides of the house, on the bare darkened ring, marked off with red ropes; and across the stage and the tiers of chairs I saw the familiar back-drop, representing what might be a side-show pavilion with flaps drawn apart and arsenic-green trees drooping over the peak. What kind of birds, I wondered, would twitter in those sickly green leaves? Or would they twitter?

I was at home in my club. An usher said Hallo to me. Back against the wall stood Freddie Yelle talking to a friend in a low voice. He rubbed his thickened hands together; the bruised, enlarged knuckles spoke of many a tough night's work. Freddie is not a star and when he fights with the great ones he is apt to be knocked out, but he is a gamester. He was not boasting. His eyes were tired, and a little wistful. I could only overhear a word or two of what he was saying to his friend.

"I don't make so much. Out of \$600 for a mix with Charley



White, I have seconds to pay off, and training expenses. And what do I have left? A busted jaw."

What he really got out of it he could not say. But I have my guess. Yes, it is good to come back to one's club.

My seat was one of the double ones, third row from the stage. I had not been there long when the arcs boomed out and flooded the ring white, and the red gloves fell out of the air and thumped softly on the canvas floor. Then Mahoney came. The last time I had seen him was at a Bauer and Thibaud program of Mozart, Beethoven, and Franck sonatas. I spied him standing in the aisle after the concert, whacking his square thick hands together. Now as he brushed past me, he laughed, and said: "Anybody with you? No? Mine's in 'G', but I'll take a chance."

Down he squeezed beside me. My welcome to the club was complete.

The preliminaries over, I turned to Mahoney: "How's the betting on Britt and Morgan?"

"Britt isn't boxing. He's sick in bed with a cold. They got Battling Reddy from New York to take his place."

A crêpe veil dangled before my eyes! There was a bout that shaped to the proportions of a Greek vase, elbowed over by a goggle-eyed germ! The supple springs of youth distempered by chills and fever! It was a weeping shame. Battling Reddy had the job of his life to revive my interest. I saw him once a few years ago working out with Mike Glover in a New York gymnasium. A tough lad, I thought at the time, as he briskly and cheerfully stood off the veteran, then a husky middleweight. And "a tough lad" let him out, so far as I knew. He could get no more tolerance than that from my imagination. If I had not seen Joe Morgan out in the lobby perhaps I should not have minded so much, but I had seen under the brown raglan something that looked like a perfect match for Frankie Britt.

The ring filled, then cleared, and the two men were left alone on the white square with Larry Conley. Which was Reddy? Which was Morgan? Without the brown raglan I could not tell. I had to wait, to be certain, for the announcer to swing his arm this way and that and bellow the introductions. Then the bell clanged and in an instant my disappointment changed to bright elation, for as though an Arabian Night's spell were cast over

them the two boys swept together and fused into one perfect piece of machinery. The hurried last-minute match-making had been the chanciest of shots to the very centre of the bull's-eye.

I dismissed Britt with a hasty prayer for his good health. I forgot him completely. Even which was Reddy and which was Morgan mattered not. The one arched forward, shooting over and in his short looped punches. That was Reddy, tiger-leaping, snapping his gloves; the other drifted away, his head and shoulders curving backward in a defensive arch, licking the eager, pressing face with his light sharp left. That was Joe Morgan. Together they formed a faultless balance of parts in which applied and compensating forces came together in a unit. And that equipoise went singing, up and up.

That they achieved this perfect counterpoint entitled each to the same share in the honours; one man's style fitting so consummately into the other, that the whole was a triumph of artistic proportion. The house became hushed in admiration. The crowd forgot to roar for a knockout. Here was speed and crisp hitting. It would have been a blemish had either laid the other out.

Fortunately we had no ordinary referee. One with less imagination than Larry Conley might have erred. Perhaps a literal count of points scored might have given Reddy the preference. That panther-leap, after an instant of accurate focusing, the primitive passion of his versatile attack, led by a fiery left-hand, formed a dangerous army before which Morgan gave discreetly. Joe Morgan would make the ideal house-maid. He has just that flicking dust-cloth dab with his left hand that picks off the motes and specks without peril to the bric-à-brac. This was supplemented by a prolific right-hook that never quite made the hay. But the teaming of Reddy's attack and Morgan's counter defence produced symmetry, the one sifting in as the other gave way, Morgan timing his rapier offensive as the springs of Reddy's machinery were coiling for another snap forward. Their economy of effort, always at highest tension, gave forth motions of supreme grace. Where one pronounced the masculine note, the other expressed the complementary. An artist's eye could decide on no superiority. And Larry Conley has that artist's eye.

#### IV

Two stars broke through the wrack of a very cloudy evening

at the Armory A. A.: namely, Jim Corbett, ex-heavyweight champion of the world, and Joe Egan, no champion yet though he has some of the qualifications.

The preliminaries were distressing. The boys, willing enough, grunted like pigs, shoved and slammed one another in the fashion of piano-movers. Ed Green, a big black from Memphis, was the diversion of a moment. He waded after his foe on wide-spread legs, as though in rapid-moving water. He swung a right and a left, each the size and heft of a sixteen-pound shot, at extreme arm's length, and in the second round landed one cannon-ball on the side of Nixie's jaw, whereupon the tall fellow fell flat on his face. As though he were a little brother who had fallen down, the Kid picked Nixie up and lugged him to his corner.

When I sauntered up the aisle in the interval before the main bout, I had an idea of what I might meet. And there it was, a small commotion caused by a half-dozen late arrivals blocking one another out of deference to a youth of past middle age, towering over the others and humorously urging them to go in before him.

Jim Corbett has not changed, except for the better. I saw him first when I was a boy of fifteen. He was then champion of the world, and it was in this same theatre. My grandfather had taken me to see Corbett in a melodrama of which I remember nothing but some fast sparring between Corbett and Steve O'Donnell. My grandfather was a man of high aims and disciplined character, but in my eyes the fact that he had known Corbett's father-in-law out in San Francisco was his greatest distinction, and that such token of immortality scribbled on a card brought us an invitation from Corbett to visit him in his dressing-room.

Down dark passages we wound our way to a small low room nearly filled by a courteous giant of a man clad in cotton drawers, his body flushed from a cold bath and rub. I gave my frail little hand into the clasp of that ponderous fist, and looked up and up the spread of oaken chest to a head that seemed on more than human scale. I perceived even then the magnified delicacy and high temper of his features. It was not a fighting face, it was the face of an artist who won battles by more than animal subtlety.

There is something significant in the tendency of people to praise a man for misrepresenting his type. Headlines acclaim the exception to class. The poet is applauded who keeps his hair trimmed and wears an inconspicuous four-in-hand; we commend the actor who is modest and intelligent and will talk with discursive sym-

pathy of things other than himself; and we are amazed that the great pugilist has none of the blunted features of the traditional ring veteran, a bar-room swagger, or an insolent habit of making his way through a room with a shove of his chest and shoulders. It is startling and gratifying that he does not look like a fighter, that he is just like any of us!

Jim Corbett can well be proud of a career of which it is not saying too much that it changed the type of the successful pugilist from that of the cave to that of the gymnasium. No one ever did more than he toward that desirable end.

## CITY NIGHT

BY J. E. SCRUGGS

Striving for sleep, I hear a trolley grind  
 Along the rattling rails outside my door,  
 Then calm convenes, but gives way as before  
 To still another, trailing on behind;  
 Somewhere a motor backfires, and the wind  
 Of raucous horn is followed by the roar  
 Of some slow freight that labours more and more  
 Ere sleep can press brief respite on my mind.

This is man's doing. The soft, primal night  
 He filled with rack and clash and glaring light.  
 But dogs were faithful to an ancient trust,  
 And why should dogs be damned along with him?  
 He changed a world to satisfy his whim;  
 Now let him bear his folly, as he must!

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*Courtesy of The Independent Gallery*

LA LISEUSE. BY PIERRE BONNARD



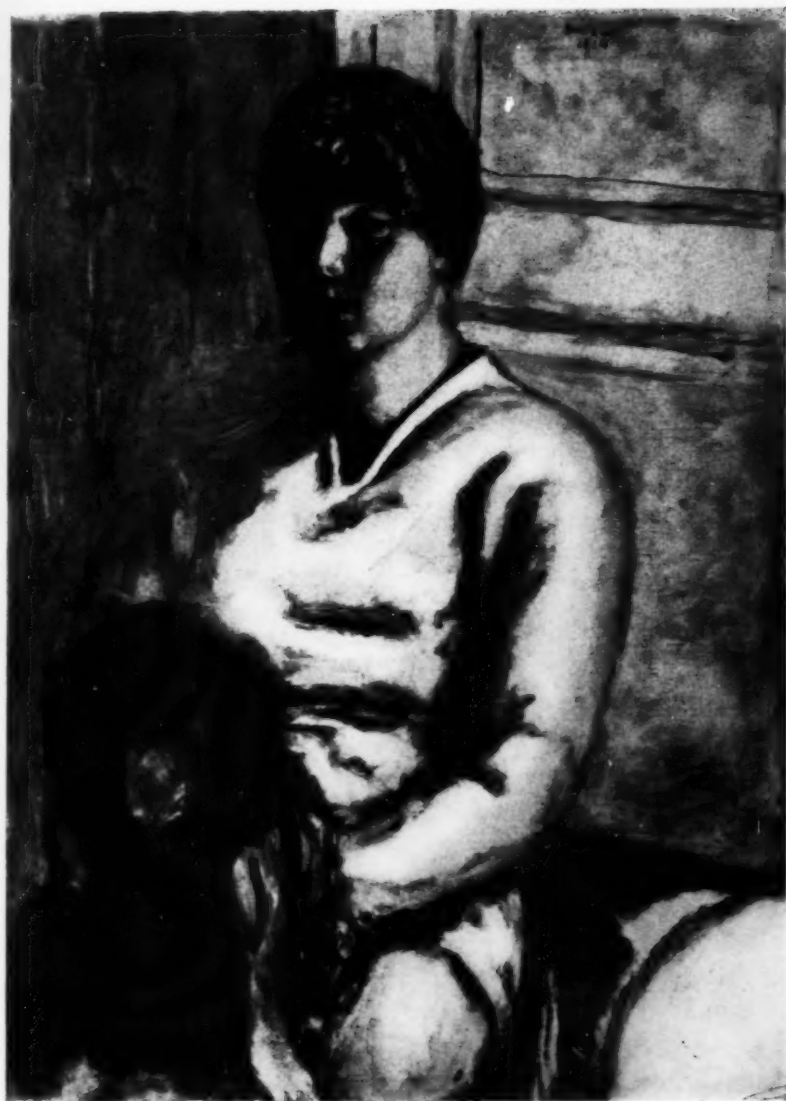


*Photograph by Druet*

LA TASSE DE CAFE. BY PIERRE BONNARD







*Photograph by Druet*

*Property of the Musée de Grenoble*

FEMME AU CORSAGE ROUGE. BY PIERRE BONNARD

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## STRAVINSKY: HIS TECHNIQUE

BY BORIS DE SCHLOEZER

*Translated From the French by Ezra Pound*

### IV (continued)

THE rhythmic element is usually considered the preponderant and particularly characteristic one in Stravinsky, the rhythm, its variety, complexity, vigour seem to determine his style, giving it the turn and colour which make it instantly recognizable. One cannot deny the importance of the element which gives ground for considering the author of *Noches* the most gifted creator of rhythms who has ever existed,<sup>1</sup> but I think that the development of rhythm in his work is the functioning product of his harmonic and melodic development, and that the rhythmic peculiarities of Stravinsky's style, as likewise his tonal and polyphonic writing, are conditioned by his general conception of music. If he has enriched the rhythmic domain; if he has given a new drive to our imagination; to our rhythmic sensibility, and thereby raised up a veritable musical revolution, this coheres with his having attained the creation of a new sonorous language—tonal and melodic.

The function of rhythm is to make us seize the duration (make us aware of length or lengths of duration) and to hand this over to our aesthetic sensibility while organizing it, that is to say, in bringing into it a certain periodicity more or less regular.<sup>2</sup>

The creator of rhythm operates not on the sonorous matter, but upon its evanescence (*écoulement*, its flowing away). This expression "creator of rhythms" may at first seem rather pretentious, for at first thought it seems as if nothing were easier than to imagine different metres, and to cut the flowing of the musical flood into

<sup>1</sup> Slight gasp, at this point, from the translator.

<sup>2</sup> The translator restrains himself with difficulty. M de Schloezer is the best critic in Europe, and he "has hold of something," but there is a totally opposed, though not perhaps contradictory, *modus* of considering this matter. Perhaps it is an wholly different aesthetic.

different periods. The field of rhythmic combinations is, indeed, limitless, but one isn't free in it, any more than in the domain of harmonic combinations. One must orientate, trace paths, the choice is not easy to make operant, mere arbitrariness is no more permissible here than anywhere else in music.

From Petrouschka onward one sees Stravinsky putting to proof the rhythmic virtuosity which causes his reputation. But his mastery is spent, up till then, only on the measures of popular dances, combined and judiciously underlined. The *Sacre* marks the beginning of his rhythmic invention. The composer really creates new metres, and displays an inexhaustible rhythmic fecundity in the *Histoire du Soldat*, *Renard*, *Noces*, the *Symphonies for Wind Instruments*, and the *Octuor*. The rhythmic diversity and complexity of Stravinsky's style are the products of long efforts, of ceaseless research, which run parallel in the elaboration of the melodic, polyphonic, and tonal writing which give the character to his art.

One must concede that there is rhythmic structure only where there is melodic and polyphonic development over a tonal basis, whatever it may be. Purely harmonic and atonal music is always rhythmically amorphous; it is, certainly, possible to shake these complexes in different ways, but the series of such shakes and shocks acquires a certain significance only as function of melodic line, in other words, only when the series of sounds possesses a determined curvature, a sense of its own, a beginning and a conclusion. It is only then that the rhythmic formula takes on the character of necessity, of logic, and imposes itself upon us as objective reality (*nécessité*), and not merely as an arbitrary construction which happens to be as it is, but might as well be something other. It is precisely this objective reality that Stravinsky has constantly sought, and he has attained it only when he could integrate rhythm in melody—which is what I am driving at.

Thus the identity which is so often claimed for the rhythmic forms of negro music with those of Stravinsky, appears to me wholly false. Assuredly the russian composer was affectable by the seductions of negro-american orchestras, as is proved by his *Rag-Time* and by certain pages of *Mavra*, showing negroid physiognomy in at least parts of the instrumentation.

What I want to designate as Stravinsky's "melodic" rhythm is

something very different from rhythm "*pure*," from the "*rhythm in itself*" of primitive peoples. There is rhythmic primitivism in Stravinsky, as there is the harmonic primitivism of which I have spoken—and they both appear, in analysis, as very refined forms of art, and one must be in verity abandoned by the Muses to consider Noces a return to the percussion of savages. True, the orchestra in this piece is comprised of nothing save four pianos and the percussion, but there are the human voices, they are preponderant, and the melody conditions the rhythmic structure.

Despite transient influences undergone, the rhythmic forms of Stravinsky are the product of our occidental musical evolution; they develop in realizing european metric concepts, even though it might seem that they are trying to free themselves from these concepts; they have become embodied thanks only to the fruitful convention of the bar.

It was fashionable, some while since, to despise the bar-measure, and to hold it responsible for the metric poverty of our music. Folk dreamed of "rhythmic liberty," and the only means "imaginable" of attaining it was the suppression of measured bars (even bars). But for a long time people have said: Liberty is sterile in art.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing is fecund save the strife versus the obstacle, there is no creation save in the action of overcoming resistance. The creator of rhythms has need of a stable limit, in the frame of which, and upon which he can exercise his effort.<sup>4</sup> And it is precisely this that the measured bar offers him, an obstacle, but also a point to tie up to. Save in a short passage in *Chant Dissident*, and another in *Rag-Time*, Stravinsky has never destroyed the measured bar; he struggles against it, he disarticulates it, he multiplies and hooks up the different metres, but he never permits himself once, and

<sup>3</sup> Matters of terminology. Let the reader wait for Monsieur de Schloezer to develop his idea.

<sup>4</sup> Monism, monotheism, monomania, the curse of the european mind. For stable limit, let us read or mean not one isolated foot-rule, but a *series of related limits*, and some of my unpublished remarks on this subject might become comprehensible to twelve instead of three people. However, for the moment let us restrain ourselves, let us stay within our frame as translator. In tracing Stravinsky's past history, the author is perfectly just. I cd. hide my insubordination by simply shifting the tense of his verbs and keeping quiet.—E. P.

for good and all, to get rid of this bothersome fiction, he needs the annoyance, the resistance, against which to leap and surge, for there is no rhythmic diversity without stability,<sup>5</sup> in relation, precisely, to which the most complex movement is perceived.

Autonomous rhythm, rhythm in pure state which acts on the auditor by itself, in that it is not serving to mark the accents of a melody, but deploying its play unhampered by melody, is rarely encountered in Stravinsky; I wd. cite as exceptions the end of the *Histoire du Soldat*, where the composer uses only percussion, and certain passages of the *Sacre*. One remarks again that if this work is one of Stravinsky's most important it is by no means characteristic of his style, as the author has since done the diametric opposite of what he had done in the *Sacre*, wherein the melodic thought had not yet succeeded in dominating the multiple harmonic and rhythmic elements and the formidable instrumental paraphernalia at his command.

In *Augures Printanières* Stravinsky fits four different metres into a two two bar and they are cast into high relief by just the fixity and uniformity of that frame. The rhythm is harmonically sustained but it might perfectly well be given by a percussion instrument, for the timbres and relative pitch are, here, of no importance, the succession of accents and shocks has its own value in itself. Yet we also find in the *Sacre* the rhythms which I have termed "melodic," the beginning of the dance of the Chosen, for example, with sequence of metres 3/16, 5/16, 3/16, 4/16, and so on; here the amazingly powerful rhythm that seems to impose itself of itself is in direct relation with the melodic design; its accents are constituent of the melodic structure, in the same degree as the pitch. But it is in the subsequent works, *Renard*, *Noces*, the *Octuor*, that the essentially melodic character of Stravinsky's rhythms appears. When, as in *Noces*, there is polyrhythmic, vertical combination of different metres, there is almost always polyphony, combination of different motifs. The battery often hammers a rhythm diverse from that of the singing, but it is the chorus which marks the design of the rhythmic structure of the phrases, the instruments merely underline the accents, sometimes coinciding, sustaining, sometimes running in counter-time. In *Noces* one can properly speak of polyrhythmic, that is of combina-

<sup>5</sup> At this point we have no disagreement.—E. P.

tions of different autonomous rhythms, but the term polymorphous wd. be more apt, in that each of the voices in the contrapuntal weaving has its accentuation, and its own metre.

In *Mavra*, in the *Octuor*, we observe a sort of reduction of rhythmic, it not only loses its independence but is simplified, also, in the vertical sense, the composer ceases to write one metre above another. The rhythm continues to gain in richness, but horizontally, rather, by the rapid and unawaited succession of more various metres. Always clearly accented, the rhythmic line grows more supple, more changeable, but its form is imposed by the melodic thought, by the interlacing of contrapuntal combinations. It is in fact the melodic line that modifies itself ceaselessly, changes its gait and accent, stretches or clots itself together, as if wishing to exhaust all metric possibilities at its disposal.

The *Piano Sonata* is very characteristic of this. The first part is in two voices, that which may be considered accompaniment is written in uniform rhythm, the other, the melody, is of great metric richness, yet in a frame that is quite solid. One may, by analysis, detach various rhythmic formulae from this succession of accents, but this pure rhythm is an abstraction, the concrete reality presents but the accentuations of one long melodic phrase.

This applies still more to *Oedipus* and to *Apollo*. In preceding work the auditor cd. still enjoy Stravinsky's rhythms in themselves, many people incapable of understanding the music showed themselves susceptible to its power; to the diversity of its dynamic accents, even when their reason denied consent. In *Oedipus* Stravinsky renounces not only the stratification of metres, but even the measured bar as something to break away from; he conforms with docility to its strong and weak accents without even syncopation, the diversities of melodic accents, their surprising variants give place to forms stable and four-square, in unmodified repetition, as in the airs of *Creon* and *Tiresias*. Save for a few passages, the chorals show a like simplicity, rhythmic stability and uniformity seeming in absolute contradiction to the tendencies of Stravinskian art as we understand them. But do we so well understand them? A little more and we should find ourselves crying "treason," for an artist is not allowed to disappoint the general expectation and to break our effigy of him. Obviously he means not to adapt himself to his audience and re-do *Sacre* and *Noces* to meet its demand?



In which case he'd be blamed anyway, for repeating himself, so that it is up to us to adapt ourselves; to try to understand and even to modify our ideas about him—evidently wrong ideas. Cd. anything show this more peremptorily than Apollo Musagetes, with its simple dance formulae, conventional, wherein nothing hooks on, nothing surprises, no unexpected accent breaks in to modify the line of melody, developing perfectly at its ease in the frame of a measure uniformly "normal."

## V

I have tried to show, without intolerably dragging in minutiae, that Stravinsky's technique has in course of its evolution undergone profound modifications, and that most of his larger works show peculiarities each of its own, differentiating it from the others. This chapter shd. have been called not "Technique" but "Techniques of Stravinsky." At most one can distinguish through the lot a current. And in the latest compositions this wd. appear to be toward re-establishing the exclusive domination of melodic thought.

The same is discoverable in his writing for voice.

At the beginning he produces cycles for texts of Verlaine and the Russian poets, Balmont, Gorodetzky. *Le Pigeon* and *Rossianska*, despite their descriptive pretensions and a certain impressionist colouring, give promise of the future *Chants Russes*. The *Lyrique Japonaise*, contemporary, more or less, with the *Sacre*, is slightly influenced by Schönberg. His own vocal style appears only with *Memories of Childhood*, in *Cat's Lullaby*, *Pleasant Songs*, *Quatre Chants Russes*.

The popular poems he uses, the texts he writes in popular speech have one trait in common, their illogicality, I might say, their absurdity. Save in such exceptions as *Chant Dissident* the words are put together not according to their meaning but because of sonorous affinities, or far-fetched association of images. No intellectuality enters this merely verbal poesy; stories, proverbs, plays upon words, vague memories of incantations, dance songs, very like children's game songs, or children playing with words, cause the comedy and burlesque.

In treating a text the musician may do various things: try to



amplify the emotional condition expressed in the words; try to translate the words one by one, commentating, describing the images. Or as Moussorgsky did, or thought he was doing: one may follow all the inflections of the spoken phrase, underlining them, bringing out the music latent in the speech; or else one may more or less adapt to the text a melody inspired by the text but having its own musical significance.

The relations of word and musical sound are quite different in Stravinsky. His songs have a peculiarity, the words have the same role as rhythmic accents, melodies, harmonies, that is, the same role as the musical elements. In genesis it is probable that the words have for the most part preceded the music and that their system of articulate sounds has roused up just that particular melody, but in the result we see that syllable, word, and phrase are seized not in their logical relation, or even in their poetic relation, but solely as so many sonorities diversely accented. The line of articulate sounds is combined in melodic line even more strictly than one instrument joins another in orchestra, with this difference also, that in his songs the two sonorous lines are presented by a single executant. But neither element has a value if isolated; only the product of their fusion—articulate sounds in melodic current—has a musical signification. Pleasant Songs, especially the Colonel, typifies this. Their texts shd. not be translated, for alteration of word-sounds destroys the very music itself. And in any case why translate? The Russian makes no sense whatever. Thus also in the burlesque story, Renard.

Note that in these works the voice is treated absolutely as instrument. I have pointed out that in later years his music was vocal in character, even his polyphony showing choral conception; this essentially "singing" character is not found in the songs we have just been discussing. Stravinsky seems to care nothing whatever for the real nature of the human voice, or for its possibilities; he treats it as an instrument; the melodic phrase is often given to the accompanying instruments, while the voice intervenes as harmonic component, or traces arabesques which find their take-off in the articulate sounds, and in the verbal accents, with which the composer takes utmost liberty. Chant Dissident in the Four Russian Songs, shows a tendency toward frankly melodic vocal style,

even though the words follow without much regard to logical sense; here the text has a discernible significance and the voice's melody has a value of its own.

In *Noces*, the chief choral work, this instrumental writing disappears altogether, the articulate sounds continue to serve as musical elements (their logical sense insignificant) they underline the rhythmic accents of the vocal phrase, but this latter acquires a personality and a definite significance, the instruments being reduced to the role of accompaniment. The phrases are usually short, chopped, nervous, but several of them are more extended, more developed, as the girl's mother's prayer in sc.1; the song of the two mothers, sc.3; and especially the boy's phrase in D-minor, sc. 2, modelled on a liturgic motif with the so characteristic Russian church cadence. These brief, clearly diatonic melodies are treated in contrapuntal style approaching the rudimentary polyphony of ancient Russian song, generally canon, or imitations usually short. Often the voices merely run parallel at fifth or octave or fourth, giving impression of lightness, purity, and archaic simplicity—with however contrast between the first three, and the fourth (Wedding Feast), in which latter the style is less dry, less linear, as the melodies are served with chords, whose elements shift in parallel, giving feeling of fulness and richness.

Some of his texts are of popular creation, as in *Noces*, some his own, and in them examination wd. show that he takes the greatest liberties with the popular style, mixing dialects and epochs with no regard to historic verisimilitude or philology. The characters' language in *Noces* is hybrid, monstrous, belonging to no fixed epoch, never spoken any where or any when in Russia, all of which faked archaism simply don't matter, he enlivens, distorts, changes the pronunciation or accent, because he is using them as musical raw matter, caring for nothing but the sonority which serves as bones in his melody. Which is, is it not, the principle governing all great vocal compositions of the XVIIIth, and even of part of the XIXth century? Have not authors of operas, airs for oratorio, ensembles and parts of chorals done the same? Isn't Stravinsky going to do it again in *Mavra* and *Oedipus*, chopping the words, making the singers repeat certain words, drawing them out, indifferent to sense of the verbal phrase, and even I might say to the

dramatic situation; procedures suited to vocal style which is not trying to make the verbal text intelligible, but merely to develop the melodic phrase, to construct a well-balanced period, well-balanced, that is, as musical, not as poetic, lyricism?

Faced with a text inspired by Pushkin (*Mavra*), or a libretto in mediaevalish latin (*Oedipus Rex*), Stravinsky behaves very much as with a folk or pseudo-folk song or story, i.e., as a vocal composer who cares only for the sounds, the musical feeling and the characteristics of the human voice. But in *Mavra* and *Oedipus* the vocal phrase has a quite different appearance from that in *Quatre Chansons Russes*; it is no longer melodic gravel, brief motifs in complex metres, but we have long melodies relatively simple in rhythmic structure, and in a form clearly conventional in that it is inspired by the russo-italian vocal style in *Mavra*, and by oratorio in *Oedipus*. One thus discerns a formalist tendency in the evolution of his song-writing in the degree that the human voice is detached from the instrumental agglomerate; in the degree that its dominant melodic role is defined, that the orchestra is limited to accompanying it, the composer presses an artificial mould on his vocal phrase, he organizes it according to ancient conventions, thus giving it impersonality, a plastic beauty rather abstract.

## VI

I think one cd. write an entire volume on the forms in Stravinsky's art, so great is the diversity of procedures in his already long career.

Stravinsky has written a great deal for the theatre. He is even, in limited sense, a dramatist. But his operas, his ballets, are constructed as works of pure music, that is to say their development is submitted to no extra-musical rule, it is in no way conditioned by scenic action, poetic image, or by any abstract idea.

You might think that the orchestra in *Petrushka* merely underlines and comments on the action, evoking the noisy, variegated activity of the fair. Not in the least: the four scenes, Fair, *Petrushka's* cell, The Moor's room, the Twilight, correspond precisely to the habitual four parts of sonata or symphony; allegro, slow movement, scherzo, finale. It is not a bare analogy, the very character of each scene fits perfectly in the classic schema.

Sc. 1, Admiralty Place, St Petersburg, is very symmetrically built: three episodes, the fête, the passe-passe, and Russian dance are two rapid movements, framing a slow episode. The fête is a rondo in which the refrain binds together the different scenes: the gang of drunks, the organ-grinder, the music-box, etc. Sc. 2, same symmetry, Petrouschka's laments and maledictions bind in the three dance movements: adagietto, andantino, allegro. 3d Sc. burlesque, that is, scherzo: dancing girl's entrance 2/4 allegro; waltz, lento cantabile, built into an highly developed trio, the reprise of the scherzo is by contrast, greatly reduced. The abrupt apparition of Petrouschka, his row with the Moor, his expulsion, finish the scene, which like the two others, is composed of three parts. The finale resumes the form of the rondo, its refrain, variant on the 1st theme, establishes strict bond between the last episodes, dance of nurses, of coachmen, merchant's entrance with two tziganes, bear-keeper, masks, murder of Petrouschka. Apart from any literary idea the unity of the work is established by exclusively musical means: monothematism, symmetry, main structure, classical sonata plan.

The unity of the *Sacre* is obtained not by symmetric structure and the return of one or several fundamental themes, but by perfect homogeneity of a clearly characterized melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic style. Each of the 11 episodes has one or two motifs of its very own, melodies or rhythmic formulae diversely treated with repetitions, rhythmic and harmonic variations, contrapuntal development. Certain themes more or less modified pass from one episode to another, thus 2nd theme of *Mysterious Circles*, appears first, reduced, in *Earth Dance*. Sometimes episodes follow each other without transition of any kind, or with sudden break off and violent contrast, as between *Spring rondeaux* and *Play of Rival Cities*. Elsewhere there is transition via a common theme, as in the linking of *Play of Cities* and *Sage's Escort*.

What we may call this "cellular structure," an assemblage of short episodes each having a characteristic melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic element, appears again in *Renard* and in *Noces*. But while the unity of the *Sacre* is obtained only by homogeneity of style, *Renard* and *Noces* have thematic unity and a symmetrical and, as you might say, "closed" composition: the end takes up the beginning. Each scene in *Noces* is a *rondeau*, possessing a motif

which functions as refrain, the whole is dominated by a single theme, which appears in the beginning, and comes, later, enriched and developed, to finish the splendid finale Wedding-Feast.

We observe slightly varied application of this same "formal" principle in Apollo Musagetes, and in Oedipus; tight compartments, composed by the dances in the ballet; by the airs, in the cantata; the Oedipus contains moreover a choral part which provides a sort of continuous current; Apollo is not unlike a suite in which the finale resumes the initial motif in peroration, almost as in Noces. In Mavra where something happens on the stage, the music seems to follow the text more closely, but the strictly melodic structure and the lucky convention of airs and ensembles, allow the composer to maintain the rights and independence of the "sonorous art."

In purely instrumental works Stravinsky's diversity of forms—the variations in the Octuor, the choral in Symphonies for Wind, etc.—does not prevent our discovering a general character. Let us admit it is negative. There is no "development" in Beethoven's sense of the term, in Stravinsky's music; nowhere can one find the typical form of sonata allegro, 2 themes, development, re-exposition, which exists in most of the great XIXth and early XXth century instrumental compositions (I except the very youthful large Symphonie in E-flat). The concertino for string quartet offers only the germ of this form, and, if you insist, you may drag it out of the plan of the first part of the Piano concerto.

Stravinsky's developments consist generally in: contrapuntal combinations of short motifs, which remain in themselves almost unchanged (Noces), or in deploying a melodic phrase which begets a succession of others, in this latter case (in the piano sonata for example) the development is what might be called material rather than formal.

*A suivre*

## TWO POEMS

BY STANLEY J. KUNITZ

### DEATH IN MOONLIGHT

A leopard no more secret  
Is than she who goes  
By night alone, observing  
Moon-foam upon the rose;

A doe is not more gentle  
Than she who palely treads  
Through peonies' white clusters,  
Brushing small rabbit-heads.

Her steps are light as dewdrops  
Among imagined sheep,  
Timid that she may startle  
A herd of rocks from sleep;

She tarries for a moment  
Beside a sky-deep pond  
To watch a floating turtle;  
Enchanted, moves beyond

To greet a glittering forest,  
A tall and starry town.  
Supple, her proud sweet body  
Crying plunges down.

### GEOMETRY OF MOOD

Concentrical, the universe and I  
Rotated on God's crystal axletree,

So perfectly adjusted in suspense  
I could not mark our split circumference,

But sphere in sphere, devotion in devotion,  
Was a thing of folding air, a windy motion.

My spinal pole, tipped with a globe of light,  
Stretched long as time into the infinite,

And when I turned to look upon the face  
Of love's incarnate form, tremendous space

Inclined upon her mouth, the natural nest  
Where, throbbing like a bird, singed thought might rest.

Concentrical, the universe and I  
Rotated on God's crystal axletree,

I core of the world, a bead in a ball of glass  
So pure that only Nothing could be less.



## THE SICK MAN

BY L. A. G. STRONG

WE chalked our cues, and began. The second break I got, I made twenty-nine.

"Bedam, you're in form to-night," said the Doctor. "I'll have my work cut out to hold ye."

I'm the sort of player that does well once he gets his tail up, and at the first hundred I led him clear. He was as sober and careful as a judge, and we hadn't another thought in our heads when the telephone rang in the surgery.

"Hell," said the Doctor. He straightened up, paused, frowned, bent down to make the shot, then straightened up again without making it.

"I'd best see," he said.

I wandered about the room, figuring out how he'd make his shot, and deciding he couldn't get it, while his voice sounded through the open door from the surgery.

"Where is he? Bere Hampden. How long has he been—*What* do ye say?" A pause. "Very well."

He came back.

"I've to go out," he said.

"What is it?"

"A chap taken ill; at Bere Hampden, of all damned places."

"What's wrong with him?"

He made a face, trying to imitate the Devon vernacular.

"'Spettin' blid.'"

He was hunching on his coat thoughtfully.

"Look here," he said at last. "Would you like to come with me? If it's very thick, it'll be easier with the two of us."

I jumped at the idea. The game was spoilt anyhow.

"Good. There are me bags, look. Bring them out, while I get the car round to the front."

The little lane from the garage was easily navigated this time of night. Navigated is the word, for it was a chain of puddles, and



in the daytime the Doctor's ducks chose it as their headquarters. No amount of experience convinced them that it was unsuitable.

"Holy Anne, it's thick, right enough."

We started, barely at walking pace, I leaning out one side, watching for the edge of the road, and the Doctor at the other. As soon as I saw it I yelled out, and he swerved abruptly away from it. Even so, we were almost in the ditch a dozen times, the first half mile. You couldn't see two yards. We tried the headlights, but at once a luminous cloud of nothing leaped up and pressed right in on top of us—like the ghost of a gigantic pat of butter—and we could see absolutely nothing at all. We had to stop dead for a minute or so afterwards to get our eyes used to the dead grey again.

Sheep lie in the roads at night, and several times there was a faint disturbance just in front of the wheels, we pulled up with a jerk, and heard the clipper-clipper of their hoofs as they moved off on to the grass. The crossroads were a sort of vast ocean.

"Keep your eyes skinned, for God's sake," said the Doctor, as we adventured blindly into the open, the engine running in little gentle spurts. I leaned right out along the footboard, my face near the ground.

"Can you see—Hell!"

There was a violent jerk, and I was thrown off on hands and knees in the road. I scrambled up like a shot.

"What's the matter?"

"We're in the ditch. My side."

Thanking my stars it wasn't on mine, I ran round. The Doctor swore suddenly into the mist with a marvellous profanity.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo," cried a deep voice, from nowhere in particular. "That can't be but one man in these parts, I know. What's the matter, Doctor?"

The Doctor laughed.

"I'm stuck in this bloody ditch," he replied. "I've had a call from Bere Hampden, of all damned places, and by the time I look like getting there, the man'll be dead six times over."

"Let's have a look, then."

There was a plunging sound, and a huge figure loomed up at our sides: young Vellacott, the factor from the Elford estate.

"She's not down very deep," grunted the Doctor, who was peering, his face an inch or two from the wheel.

"Let's see. Oh, that's all right. Start your engine, and I'll give her a heave. Stand away, sonny."

I stood away, feeling my helplessness.

There was a whirr, a scuffle, a shout, and the dark shape of the car shot off suddenly into the curtain and was lost. Instantly the brakes squealed, and the clamour of the engine dropped to a quiet pulsation.

"Good man, Vellacott. Good man indeed," came the Doctor's voice. "That's good. Thanks. Come on, Byrne."

"Where are you?" I called. The grey darkness seemed thicker than ever: I had lost all sense of direction.

"This way."

The huge form took my arm. Humiliated, I let myself be led forward: and the car was suddenly there in front of me, from nowhere.

"How the hell do you manage to see in this stuff," asked the Doctor, as I clambered gratefully in.

"Born to it, I expect," laughed Vellacott. "Good-night, and good journey."

"Fine chap, that," said the Doctor, as we drove on. "By gad, it's clearing a bit."

Without noticing any change, we found ourselves suddenly able to see the sides of the road. The rest of our journey was quicker, except for a few pockets of mist, in dips and hollows, where we had to go as before. In the end we covered the four miles in a little under an hour and a half.

The house we pulled up at looked forlorn and desolate. There was no sound but the sighing of the mist and a steady dripping from the roof. The Doctor got out his bag, and disappeared down the path. I heard him knock. The door opened: an irrelevant gleam of light sent a thick shaft upward, and a low murmur of bucolic voices rose and was hushed by the shutting of the door. I was left alone, in silence.

I knew exactly where we were. The house was one of two or three on the outskirts of the village. There must have been fifty people within a couple of hundred yards of me, but for all I saw

or heard I might have been in the middle of Dartmoor. Once, it is true, a woman passed, or so I judged from her quick steps, and the dim huddled shape that suggested a shawl held tight over head and shoulders: and then, from nowhere at all, a young collie dog stood at my side, wagging his tail effusively. Otherwise there was nothing but the faint, soft sigh of the mist, and the shower of drops that a cold gust of breeze would loosen from the gutters or the telegraph wires. I seemed to be there a long time. Life settled down, as it were, and became just that: a vigil in the dark beside a deserted car, outside a house which showed no life.

Then at last the door opened, and there was a babble of voices. A little group of people crowded out, and lined up on either side of the door, as if outside the church after a wedding. More figures appeared.

I started. The Doctor was calling my name.

"Bring the torch," he said: and immediately his cry was caught up by the group at the door.

"Torch . . . torch . . . bring the torch. Please to bring the torch, young sir, Doctor says. The torch—the torch. . ."

I groped under the flap in the car, and advanced towards them, switching it on. The figures all leaped into clearness.

The Doctor on one side, and a stranger on the other, were supporting the sick man. He was bald, and had a chubby round face. His collar had been taken off, and his shirt was open at the neck. He walked slowly, placing his feet with extreme care; on his face was a thoughtful expression, remote, slightly puzzled, as if he were thinking out some problem that had nothing to do with his surroundings. All this I saw in a flash, for the Doctor called out sharply, "Throw the light on the path," and the voices took up the cry with instant solicitude, "On the path. The light on the path . . . the path." After that I saw nothing but the hesitating feet, picking their way unsteadily in the beam of light, with the strong supporting feet on either side.

The sick man was put in the car, leaning back, wrapped up well. Someone got in beside him, holding a wet towel in his hand. He peered anxiously into the sick man's face, but the sick man was looking up into the mist.

"Hop in."

We started amid a chorus of good-nights; the little crowd became spectral, and vanished. It was clearer. We could see both hedges. Presently, when we got out on the moor, the mist had broken altogether, and we could see great white banks of it being plucked slowly away by the breeze.

The sick man's companion spoke to him in a low voice, but there was no answer.

"All right?" called the Doctor over his shoulder.

"Ah, sir. All right," came the reply.

One more belt of mist we struck, and nearly ran into a sheep; and then I could see my own house, half a mile away on the left.

"I'll put you down at the crossroads," said the Doctor. "I have to take this chap back to Buckland. He's here on a visit, to his brother's. I daresay I shall be some time with him there."

"Right, Doctor."

A couple of minutes later he pulled up.

"Well. I'm sorry our last game was broken up. Never mind. We'll have great games at Easter to make up. Good luck, now." I jumped out, and the car went on.

"Good-night," called the sick man's companion. The sick man did not move. He was still staring up at the sky, busy with his problem.

I think that was the evening I remember best of all I had with the Doctor.

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SLATER BROWN. BY HART CRANE



## TWO POEMS

BY MACKNIGHT BLACK

### ARC

Along the darkened curve  
That binds the pale and broken sea  
I mark the world's wet edge.  
Though at my feet the ocean gnaws  
On stone, and quarrels with the land  
At this stormed boundary, beyond  
There swings a dim line where the flood  
Juts clear on space. And as I stand, I feel  
Along my body's warm frontier  
My blood like waves in battle with the earth;  
But where my last horizon breaks  
On moon and star, across the universe,  
There is no turmoil, but an arc-wide peace—  
Its centre where my heart beats on.

### THIS DAY

The world is like an ocean, black with power;  
The giant shoulders that we felt beneath  
Are swell on swell remote as fire;  
The chanting that we heard  
Is voiceless water moving terribly—  
A storm-quick wilderness that stopped  
Our throats with its deep breath.  
The darkness ends and we are dumb with sight,  
And cannot cry as, blinded, we have cried  
Our fear and our desire.



## VILLON'S LIFE AND TIMES

BY JOHN EGLINTON

THE poet is, by pre-eminence, the man of moods. Mood is that withdrawn psychological precinct in which he has intercourse with his Muse; it is also the condition which he imposes upon us in order to cast upon us his spell. It is within these moods that new rhythms have been hatched which have enchanted the ears of mankind. Tennyson, for example, whose technique retains few secrets for our own artists in verse—who is, in short, what is irreverently called a “back number”—appears in retrospect something of a colossus because, beyond comparison with any poet of the present day, he possessed the power of dominating men through his moods, and so constituted an epoch. Say what we like of him, he was the last poet in British literature who possessed this power to a supreme degree. Perhaps, for so great a vogue and influence as those of Tennyson, there is a preparation in the circumstances of the time for the reception of a particular mood: in Tennyson's youth, for instance, there may have been a kind of matutinal expectancy predisposing men for the reception of the mood in which such a poem as *The Lady of Shalott* was conceived. And certainly, four centuries earlier, there was a preparation in the circumstances of the time for the reception of such a poem as the *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis* by François Villon, the poet in whose cloudy and moody soul modern lyric poetry—at all events, French modern lyric poetry—may be said to have been hatched. Villon is almost as much the wonder of poetry as Joan of Arc (who was burned in the year of his birth) is the wonder of history. In him we hear all at once the tone of a modern. The resemblance in the style of the *Grand Testament* to that of Byron in *Don Juan* has often been noted, and Mr Nicolson<sup>1</sup> hardly exaggerates when he says that “whole stanzas of *Don Juan* are little more than ‘sea-changes’ of what Villon had previously said.” In Villon the great step is made of sublimating object into subject.

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Works of François Villon*. Translated from the French by J. U. Nicolson. Illustrated by Alexander King. Two volumes. 8vo. 809 pages. Covici, Friede. \$20.

Life no doubt is the subject-matter of the *Roman de la Rose*, but that is a systematic, almost an encyclopaedic account of things human. It is an altogether different thing when the mind of the poet isolates an object or character, penetrates and possesses it, and supplies it with the entelechy of an explanation or utterance of itself. This, which is the natural exercise of the imagination, is essentially the dramatic sense. In England, there had already been a supreme and decisive manifestation of this faculty in Chaucer, who, visited in his last years by a strange and sudden illumination, constituted for his country an inexhaustible tradition for imaginative literature. No French poet had so conceived poetry until this gaol-bird, with his heavenly gift of musing, found language for the obscure soul of his old mother, lost in her his own corrupt and wounded soul.

We are justified in thus qualifying Villon personally, but it must be confessed that we know very little about his soul. We know or can guess a good deal about his life, and we have a considerable amount of personal statement by himself in his Testaments, often obscure and ambiguous yet often appearing to supplement the facts of his damaging criminal record. Yet we must be wary of regarding as biographic material those poems of his which seem most temptingly personal, the ballades in which his mind was caught into the mood of dramatic perception. When we consider the undoubted dramatic element in the *Ballade to the Virgin* we cannot but suspect that an equally dramatic element enters into the *Ballade of Fat Margot*, which appears to exhibit the poet in his extreme degradation. Neither Mr Nicolson nor Mr D. B. Wyndham Lewis<sup>2</sup> shows any disposition to "whitewash" Villon. Mr Lewis in particular—whose book is conceived in a Bellocose spirit—gives us the impression that he would not part with one of Villon's iniquities, and on this very question of whether the "scabrous display" of the *Ballade of Fat Margot* is "purely literary"—Gaston Paris held that it was—he professes indifference: on the whole he thinks it a "personal and authentic document." What of this? It all happened in the glorious Middle Ages, that period in which human society was interpenetrated by the presence of a divine entity, the Church, which understood men, took upon it men's sins, and left life much more interesting than in such drab

<sup>2</sup> François Villon. By D. B. Wyndham Lewis. 8vo. 407 pages. Coward-McCann. \$5.

times as ours. He tells a saying of Robert de Sorbon, Chaplain to Saint Louis, that "however great the sinner who has come to me, I have always loved him a hundred times more after confessing than before"—a beautiful saying, doubtless, but one capable of several interpretations. Both these writers appear to think (and they are probably right) that it is good for us to have Villon exhibited in all his vileness; as they write, their eye seems to be upon us, as if they were prepared with some annihilating retort should we betray ourselves by a gesture of disapproval. What they think we will say, what they almost hope we will say, in order that they may crush us with their opinion of ourselves, is that society must have been pretty rotten in an age when its greatest poet had to thief and do worse things for a living. It is a natural remark to make, all the same; for when Villon lived and wrote, society was on the point of remarkable new departures.

Mr Lewis writes a vivid narrative. His labour has been evidently one of love, and if much knowledge of Villon's period and of old Paris, together with a very pleasant manner of writing, could bring the poet truthfully before us, we might yield ourselves to this author's confident divinations. Yet some clue is wanting to make the poet's character credible. Mr Lewis ignores, for instance, the respectable or Jekyll side of Villon's character, preserved apparently up to his twenty-fifth year, when he could write of himself as "*le bien renommé Villon*." He had points of contact with respectable society, and Mr Nicolson has a rather plausible theory that he was an illegitimate son of one of the Montcorbiers. His name probably had not all its present associations for his distinguished acquaintance—for Guillaume de Villon or the Provost of Paris or for Charles d'Orléans. It would be fair to Villon to see him in the state from which he fell. We conceive him witty, attractive, vain as those are who associate by preference with their inferiors; serious, intensely serious, about one thing only, artistic form and language, and lending a scholar's amused attention to the slang he heard round him (in this respect a little like the James Joyce whom I remember in his early Dublin days.) As a rule, any form of seriousness will keep a man straight, and merely to assume in Villon the coexistence of the ruffian and the artist appears a crude psychology. Did ever a Jekyll hold his Hyde under such dispassionate observation? Were there not so black a record against him, one would swear that all his rascality was dramatic

and literary. Any theory by which it might appear that his thievings were a little out of the common would be welcome, and I have sometimes wondered whether one such theory might not be based on the fact that most of his depredations appear to have been on church property. One thing is certain, that it is not the voice of a social outcast but the voice of his age that we hear in his lyric lamentations upon Death.

There is no more curious comment to be made on this culminating period of the Age of Faith than that it was the period in which men were most horribly afraid of death. What does this betoken? That life was then so great a happiness that the thought of being snatched from it was at all times a torment? Experience teaches the truth of the poet's words:

"Death never seems so beautiful to me  
As when all care doth round my spirit cease."

What gives Death its chief terrors? It is the sense of frustration, of being cut off before one has learned anything, experienced anything, enjoyed anything, done anything. The fulfilment of a part, the discharge of a chosen task wondrously allays our misgivings, and reconciles us to the conditions upon which life for a little while was lent to us. "Ripeness is all." But the horror of death which seized upon the consciousness of men at the close of the Middle Ages, prompting the artists to depict the Dances of Death, and inspiring the poems of Villon, Dunbar, and others, indicates to my mind a profound dissatisfaction with life as it was then lived, and was a direct arraignment of the faith which then professed to control and console men. Death was horrible because life was horrible, ill-arranged, suppressed, contorted, frustrated, cheated. Move a little onward in history, into the days in which the Reformers had begun to make religion sweet again to the common folk; when the common man, it is true, with his new privilege of private judgement, picked all kinds of extravagant meanings out of a Bible which he now read for himself with overweening trust; when the advocates of one interpretation slew those of another; even when men began to weary of these battles and misunderstandings and to settle down into the business of money-grubbing and inventions which has defaced all the fair framework of an ordered society: still, there was an altogether different feeling

about life from that which prevailed in Villon's day; one had it to a far greater degree under one's own control; the obsession of death vanished; one could live one's life, or even take it, like an old Roman or a Japanese Samurai. When modern life at last produced a poet with points of resemblance to Villon in character and circumstances, Robert Burns, his theme was life and not death—contact with the soil, love and liberty. The whole setting of his life was something unimaginable in Villon's day, and was purely modern—or if you like, ancient.

There is this further to be said on behalf of the modern world, so far as concerns Villon, that it is almost within our own times that he has first been fully understood and appreciated. It is surprising to read in Gautier, writing early in the nineteenth century, that Villon was then known in France chiefly through Boileau's ridiculous couplet about him. It is only our own age which has seen in him not only what Clément Marot called him, the greatest of the Parisian poets, but the greatest poet of his time. Villon has become a world poet, one with whose quality the general reader in all countries is more or less acquainted. In English-speaking countries, everyone knows Rossetti's rendering of the *Dead Ladies*, and Stevenson's essay has familiarized most readers with the main outlines of Villon's surprising story. On the stage, in fiction, and even on the movies he has been no unacceptable or infrequent figure. In 1878, John Payne published a translation of the "Petit" and "Grand" Testaments, and a fresh translation was recently issued for the Casanova Society. And now Mr J. U. Nicolson presents us with a complete text and translation in two handsome volumes. Another translation still is promised. In Mr Nicolson's version there is much to praise; he brings to his task a richer vocabulary than Payne, and a greater daring in his rhymes; though it must be owned that his happy boldnesses are often paid for by weakness in the dependent part of the stanzas; yet when one is in doubt the eye travels easily to the fine text printed on the opposite page. In conclusion, I will warn the reader not to be deterred by the fantastically hideous illustrations, from making acquaintance with a really able work.



PALESTINE LANDSCAPE. BY ISRAEL PALDI

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## A DREAM

BY LAWRENCE HUNT

MY companion, whom I had not noticed before, spoke to me. "It's getting pretty late, so we'll have to walk faster." "Yes," I said, "but where are we going?" And for the first time I looked at my surroundings. They were rather queer in a way. We were walking along an asphalt road which took a serpentine course through the flattest countryside imaginable. Not the slightest rise in the land, not a tree or a bush and, on looking closer, not a blade of grass could I see. The ground itself was just plain, pebbly soil. It was dusk, but even the sky lacked variety—a faint dull grey merging almost imperceptibly into a dull black.

There was not a sound, even our footsteps were silent, but that was not surprising, for we were walking with bare feet. There was nothing weird about it, I thought; everything was too much the same.

I examined my companion's appearance and saw at once that he was a complete stranger. He was a hard fellow to make out—a little taller than I, with an average build. He was not young nor old nor middle-aged. You could call him any age at all. His dress was a trifle unusual: barefooted as myself, he wore no coat or vest, but a dark grey shirt opened at the throat; his trousers, perfectly creased, were black. The face of the man was not only ageless, but expressionless; it lacked either the obvious unreality of a mask or the least distinctiveness that the faces of all men have to some degree. He wasn't weird either, I thought.

We continued walking. There was really nothing else to do. I wasn't tired or hungry or lonely or fearful or sorry or anything in fact. So we walked and walked and everything remained the same.

Finally I felt a distinct emotion—it was curiosity. "Why are we walking in this place and where are we going?" I asked. My companion said nothing and we kept on walking; everything—the road, the land, the sky, remained the same. After a while, I don't know how long a silence there had been, I repeated my question.

"You'll see very soon," he said. His voice was like his face—just a voice—neither high nor low, neither stern nor kind.

Suddenly I looked about me and I noted with no surprise that we were walking along a dirt road between vast mountains of rock—almost cliffs, they were so steep. It was still dusk. There was no sound. The road became narrower, the mountains steeper. It was like a canyon now. The road turned and twisted, but it didn't matter for I wasn't tired. My curiosity had left me entirely.

"Are you ready to die?" asked my companion.

"I don't care one way or the other," I replied, and I didn't.

"You are going to die very soon," he said. "All right," said I.

We continued walking. Everything remained the same around me.

We followed a turn in the road and came upon a log cabin built in the side of the cliff. We both went up to it, and my companion opened the door and we stepped in. It was dimly lighted by a dusty, old oil lamp resting on a square wooden table which, aside from two chairs on opposite sides of it, was the only furniture in the room. A stone fire-place contained some ashes and a charred log. There was one window near the door. There was really nothing remarkable or interesting about the place.

We sat down at the table opposite each other. The lamp lighted up our faces and I studied my companion more closely with almost the same results as before. But not quite—no—there was a difference. "What is it?" I thought. There was something about that face that seized me—seized my mind and soul. It *was* the same as before—no—it wasn't. "Is he old or young or middle-aged? Is he—well, *what* is he?" I looked into his eyes—dark, grey, unfathomable depths. And then I realized that *whatever* he was he *knew* everything—*everything*. I looked at him again, and there was a faint smile—very faint it was—but maddening.

My mind was raging with all the emotions, all the thoughts, all the desires I had ever known, raging in a mad chaos. Was I losing my mind? No, strangely, I could still think quietly. It was as if my mind were divided into two rooms—in one, Hell had broken loose, but in the other I was quite calm and without one emotion.

I looked at him again. There was nothing more I could discover. He spoke with the same voice as before: "I have chosen you as the one human being to whom I shall reveal the *Secret of the Universe*,"

he said. "You, too, shall know everything—*everything*. You shall know the *Why* and the *How*. Do you understand? All that men have *tried* to know, all that men can *never* know, *you* shall know in just a moment. Eternity, the Universe, Death, Life, the Soul, God—all these you shall know."

"And then I die, I suppose?" said I.

"Not necessarily," he said, "if you want to live and tell your fellow-men—all right. Just as you like."

"Fair enough," I laughed. "It will be something of a sensation."

I looked at him again. He knew everything—*everything*.

His hands rested on the table. They were folded. They opened. There was a slip of paper in them. It was folded. He handed it to me. I opened it. I read what was written thereon. I folded it again and handed it back.

"I would rather die," I said.

## SHORE

BY L. KENNEDY

Sand shifts with every tide, and gravel  
Slurs against the rock,  
Weeds and a little lifted silt remain  
Marking the reach of water, the long shock  
Of an absent tide.  
Here is no stencilled track of tern, no trace  
Of the slight feet of curlews, here no lace  
Of foam for the braided webs of gulls to press  
Into the falling bosom of the sea.

. . But silt left by the receded tide, a ravel  
Of weeds thrown high by the wash of water, a crest  
Of wave, distant, beyond the cove.

## PARIS LETTER

**A**UTUMN in the little village of Villefranche-sur-Mer on the French Riviera and the scratching of many pens rises to my windows: the writers are hard at it; to them, as to the peasants, the country does not mean repose. Even to lie down is no respite for the poet; Giraudoux in one of his most felicitous figures compares him with that other recumbent labourer, the miner in the mine. And so, down at the water's edge, Jean Cocteau, encircled by all the enraptured children of the village, is writing poetry or replying to Maritain. Above, almost on the top of the ridge, Glenway Wescott is at work on a new novel with his unerring technique which, however precise, does not relieve the Apple of the Eye of its bloom. Wescott and Julian Green are consummate novelists at twenty-five, this to the confusion of the axiom we had always been constrained to honour—that one cannot be a novelist in his twenties. Jean Cocteau's new hero, his own discovery and treasure, bestowed at once upon the public, with the characteristic generosity of this charming gentleman, is Jean Desbordes. Yesterday unknown, Jean Desbordes has published a book called *J'adore*. It is neither novel nor poem, but a succession of poetic tableaux infinitely charming and simple—a kind of pantheistic effusion of a young man who awakens to life unprompted as to good and evil and who practises either with equal innocence. The pages open with a sexual outburst of the most unrestrained expression, recalling somewhat certain celebrated verses of Walt Whitman, and finally arrive at the sort of lyric union with the earth itself attempted at the end of *La Terre* by Zola, whose inelegant naturalism here played him false.

The confessions of Desbordes (I use confessions in the sense in which J. J. Rousseau employed it and not in the Catholic sense, for the author is, as I have said, a very long way from the act of repentance since he is unaware he has sinned) have drawn upon Jean Cocteau who had recommended them to the Parisian public with especial warmth, the wrathful thunder of the conventional press, and of the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, thus completing the breach which had already begun to divide these

two. Maritain in *Dialogues*—his collection of essays for this summer—is annoyed to a degree that any one dare call purity what is only license and libertinage. Anything is pure in our day, he says, that is done freely, impulsively, and with neither forethought nor afterthought. He bitterly chides the young of this generation, denouncing an abuse of the word purity, which to him is a mental aberration; the word is being applied to everything, to the Marquis de Sade or to the séances of the Tcheka. Maritain demands that "purity" be restored to a state of grace. Severe with Cocteau whose salvation seems to him heavily compromised, Maritain is even harsher with the Sur-Realists whom he drolly calls "the last of our dandies." There is dandyism especially in Aragon, whose influence on the younger writers is more perceptible than that of André Breton, as appears from their new reviews of this year, *Orbes*, *Discontinuité*, *Le Grand Jeu*, et cetera.

Aragon's latest work, *Traité du Style*, is quite mediocre, and I have heard that his friends themselves are little content with it. The title of this violent, scurrilous book which recalls Laurent Tailhade and the "Anarchist" pamphlets of the eighteen-nineties, might well have been drawn from the extravasations of certain back-room mural writers of which "To hell with the Reader" is too mild a selection. M Aragon has doubtless attempted a dangerous book here; but if there is danger to an Italian or a Russian for writing that he hurls his excrement into the face of Mussolini or that he spits upon the body of Lenin, there is absolutely none to a young French author in insulting the Third Republic, Mr Doumergue, or the French Army. These abusive outbursts make no one marvel, weep, or rage, and fall flat amid general indifference. May Aragon become again the master of piquant, precise, conventional prose—more unyielding than *Hérodias*, as in *La Femme Française* and in the first part of *Le Paysan de Paris*.

André Breton has just published *Nadja*, a sort of journal of an intrigue he had with a young woman encountered casually on the boulevards—a book which bears every indication of madness but of a madness often bordering on genius. The compelling hysteria, the automatism of the woman, Breton sets down with the impassibility of a report of a mediumistic séance, but without thereby losing in the least his poetic gift. This little novel, illustrated with photographs which add to its unusualness since they affirm its actu-

ality better than could words themselves, is Breton's best production and I understand that it has been received with acclaim. What seems to us important about Nadja is that here for the first time sur-realism liberates itself from subjective lyricism, from the pathetic outcry, from the pythonic blasphemy, and without sacrificing its mysticism, on the contrary effects a work of art, clear, coherent, and dramatic.

François Mauriac, who, as everyone knows, is in the very forefront of the French novelists we shall continue to call "young" simply by way of respect for their elders, has just given us a biography of Racine, the great merit of which is that the book is not done in the style of the novel. It is quite evident, after the notable successes of the trio Strachey-Maurois-Ludwig, that the high point in that type of biography has been reached. Mauriac has, then, given us the real Racine, which has not prevented him from bringing out—as in most of the characters he has drawn—a soul torn by the conflict between earthly love and the divine: Racine, courtier and gallant, of whom Phèdre is the last emotional expression; then the repentant and aging Racine—of Esther and Athalie. Mauriac is a born novelist, a species at the present time in France becoming rarer, for we are witnesses of the novel's forsaking its classic form and becoming lyricism, fantasy, essay, journalism, political pamphleteering, et cetera.

So much the more timely is the appearance of Mauriac's The Novel which has come out almost simultaneously with the publication in England of Forster's reflections on the same subject. We are living at a time when there are no more conflicts, Mauriac very well says. Friend Freud has purged us so efficaciously that our sleep is dreamless. Now what is a novel but a dream? As humanity waxes fat with health, the novelist who after all thrived upon the illnesses of his fellows, becomes proportionately lean. We are in the midst of a novel famine, a crisis which is hardly noticed by the same public who consume stories so avidly, but which is copiously commented on by critics whom the success of the novelists has always robbed of their sleep and who therefore pursue them with the same hate that basses reserve for tenors. One can portray conflicting passions—Mauriac very aptly remarks—but how depict the passions of to-day which know no limit? The young generations no longer comprehend the *chefs d'oeuvres* of the past



because the moral key to them has been lost. The emotions themselves have no more unity since Proust with his "*intermittences du coeur*" has so masterfully dissociated them that the coherent reality they used to possess no longer exists to us. There remains the saddening spectacle of a satisfied materialistic humanity and what Pascal has so well called "the misery of man without the Divine." Thus we have the triumph of the works of Colette, says Mauriac, in which aged retired courtesans and men of doubtful morality move under the shadow of a paganism without grandeur—as in those two admirable novels, *Chéri* and *La Fin de Chéri*.

Mauriac then discusses several matters particularly close to his heart, proceeding to his own defence as a Catholic writer, and to the charge of a section of the Catholic Right Wing that he is a demoralizer and a disturber replying—we must admit—with authority and neither equivocation nor subtlety. As to the possibility of interrelating French orderliness (e.g., the type characters in French fiction from Balzac to Bourget, people of a single vice or virtue, to the point of being allegorical figures) and Russian complexity, Mauriac notes our indebtedness to Dostoevsky whose admitted influence on Anglo-Saxon letters up to the post-war period cannot be said to have been greater than that he exerted in France. Gide's lectures on the author of *The Idiot* have proved that.

I should not fail to mention—in the Review which not long ago published *Lucienne*—the sequel to that brilliant work which Jules Romains has just put out: *Le Dieu des Corps*. This book is the story of a wedding night. Evidencing in the highest degree his mastery in lyric naturalism, Romains recounts with a moderation and sincerity quite rare in French literature, the union of the man and the woman, in the intoxication of mutual possession.

I have already expressed my admiration for the novels of Luc Durtain. Following *Quarantième Etage* and on a similar theme, *Hollywood Dépassé* is a composite picture of contemporary America. The style is alert, picturesque, and often powerful—little living tableaux, whose action is somewhat loosely linked together but thus permits the author to exhibit his different types of adventurer against their Western backgrounds. I do not share Durtain's views on the United States. "The poverty (intellectual) of the people calling itself the richest in the world," these "men, who



because they have made a fortune believe they have attained the absolute," the shameful public display of private matters, the bad taste, the hypocrisy, Hollywood, considered as the veritable symbol of the United States, that Hollywood which Sandroz the adventurer imitates at first, then disdains, and finally "surpasses"—all that is only one side of America, and not its most interesting, although perhaps its most picturesque aspect.

The United States and Hollywood are too often confounded in hasty judgement by the European public to whom Durtain simply offers what they demand. But one could just as readily portray America as the soul, the ideal, and ultimate haven of white civilization, and, in a composite picture not so different from the one Luc Durtain has attempted, prove that at an epoch when Asia is no more than an ineffectual West, the United States are able (as a State) to make better use of their wealth than have any people in the course of history.

PAUL MORAND

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## LONDON LETTER

*January, 1929*

THE dowager placidity of London has been unkindly disturbed, and by a book. Not by Elizabeth and Essex, not by Orlando, but by a novel called *The Well of Loneliness* by a Miss Radclyffe Hall. The main facts of the case are no doubt well known in the United States. The novel was published at twice the ordinary price, it received polite if unenthusiastic notices from most of the respectable papers, and the publishers in their advertisements made no attempt to exploit it as an audacity. A gentleman, so to speak, who writes for the Sunday papers, made an attack in the yellowest manner upon the book, and demanded its suppression. He would rather give a young person a phial of prussic acid, he said, than *The Well of Loneliness*. As the young person would presumably neither drink the acid nor get through the book, the distinction perhaps was not important. However, *The Well of Loneliness* was obediently seized by the police. We are used in England to being told what we may read and what we may see. We have a censor of plays. Mr D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* was suppressed, and customs-house officers are on the continual look-out for the blue book of *Ulysses*. But on this occasion a few people did decide to protest. And when the case came before the magistrate, the court was filled with writers who were, I do not say eager, but at any rate ready, to testify in favour of the book; among them, I think, Bernard Shaw, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Desmond MacCarthy, Rose Macaulay, and Hugh Walpole. But the magistrate, not improperly, refused to hear their evidence. It was for him, he said, not for the critics, to decide if the book was obscene. And in due course, he decided that it was. The first amusing point is that this particular magistrate has been for a long time a regular contributor to *The London Mercury*, and his employer, the Editor, had already condemned the book. This did not affect his judgement, of course, but in the circumstances a more sensitive man might have refused to try the case. The most entertaining point, however, is that the witnesses were just the people who were least likely to admire the novel.

For *The Well of Loneliness* is as literature almost worthless. It is earnest, it is well intentioned, it is sincere. But it is ill written, and the authoress's point of view is exceedingly tiresome. Self-pity is the chief emotion expressed: "If I dress in almost masculine clothes, and live in open love with another woman, I don't get asked to Debutante Balls." That is what the heroine's complaints amount to. Miss Radclyffe Hall bears a strong resemblance to Mr A. S. M. Hutchinson. If *Winter Comes* is about a man who hates war. *The Well of Loneliness* is about a woman who loves women. Otherwise the books are hardly distinguishable. They are both equally sentimental and humourless. Miss Radclyffe Hall's book has every quality of a best seller. For it is the sort of book which makes the uncritical public say, "It is so beautifully written." Consequently some persons have felt that it made a bad *casus belli*. A work by Proust or Gide, something of certain literary merit, they maintained, should be the ground chosen for the defence of adult liberty. In this I think they were wrong. Our magistrates are not good judges of literary merit—even when they review books for *The London Mercury*. They would instinctively dislike Proust or Gide far more than they do Miss Radclyffe Hall. For these two writers have not the faults which endear Mr A. S. M. Hutchinson to the English-speaking world. And it seems to me that it was a wise as well as a fine movement on the part of such writers as Mrs Woolf and Mr Forster to forget their fastidiousness, and come to the defence of *The Well of Loneliness*.

Another book that we are not allowed to read is *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D. H. Lawrence. But this is a very different matter. For one thing no attempt was made to sell the book except surreptitiously: it is undeniably obscene. For another, Mr Lawrence is a very gifted writer. I have not seen so much as one review of the book, I presume because no review copies were sent out, not because the critics would blush to read it. Several of Mr Lawrence's most discriminating admirers have told me that it is his best book. I cannot agree. It contains splendid passages, but though he has permitted himself to say everything, to use every word, however monosyllabic, it seems to me to have profited him nothing. The book is a hymn of hate against the intellect. This may not in itself be against it, but such hate needs an intellectual background. Mr Aldous Huxley makes one of the characters in *Point Counter Point* the mouthpiece of Mr Lawrence's

ideas. And certainly he makes them much clearer than Mr Lawrence ever did. Mr Huxley, himself conspicuously an intellectual, sympathizes with Mr Lawrence's fear of the intellect; and, while enjoying life exuberantly, joins in Mr Lawrence's jeremiads. They have both got it into their heads that the development of the brain entails atrophy of the capacity for love. I cannot say, looking at the more intelligent persons whom I know, that this seems very general. On the contrary. But evidently we are just passing through a crisis in the growth of consciousness. It has been spreading with unprecedented and ever increasing velocity. And these lamentations, are, I think, caused by growing pains.

A Parliamentary Commission has been sitting to enquire into the arrangement and administration of our museums. I fear that its activities, however well intended, will be ineffective. The museum official is the modern representation of the ascetic spirit. He does not enjoy beauty himself, and consequently makes it his business to prevent others from doing so. The rule varies in strictness in different countries. I have seen museums in Germany which were positively intended to give pleasure. One of the worst in the world is the Louvre, where the best pictures are either hidden in remote attics, which are open only on rare occasions, or else carefully placed in little cabinets where no light ever enters, or, best of all, covered with so thick and dirty a coat of varnish that no sacrilegious eye can intrude upon their beauty.

The British Museum is run on almost equally Jansenist principles. I suppose it contains the finest collection of savage art in the world. But every precaution has been taken that no one should extract aesthetic pleasure from it. Glass cases are stacked with objects arranged either haphazard or according to their utility. I dare say the officials responsible have not yet heard that most of us think that African and Pacific sculpture can be marvellously beautiful. But if this did come to their ears, they would no doubt contrive to conceal their masterpieces even more effectively. Look at what has been done with the Elgin marbles. These, as is well known, were bought about a hundred years ago by Lord Elgin. Many think that it was wicked to take them from the Parthenon. The dangers they ran there were many, it is true. But hardly greater than those they have since experienced. To begin with, the ship conveying them foundered. They were fished up and brought to

London, where the leading authorities of the day condemned them as fakes. It must be remembered that Thorwaldsen and Canova at that time set the standards of Greek Art. However, they were bought by the Nation from Lord Elgin for much less than they had cost him, and hidden in a basement. The museum officials remained true to type. And when at last they were placed in the saloon where now they stand, it was arranged that they should be shown to the greatest possible disadvantage. The walls were painted a dark red, as little light as possible was allowed to percolate through the dirty panes of the roof, and the marbles, which need the dazzling light of a Greek sun, slumber all but invisible in the murkiest room in London. One may prefer the art of the Archaic period. But at least we might be allowed to see the proudest products of the age of Phidias. I did not myself realize how magnificent they were, until I saw plaster casts of them—and plaster is a detestable material—in the brilliantly lit museum of Copenhagen.

The Victoria and Albert Museum of Applied Art is hardly better, though the director is a sensitive and intelligent man. Masterpieces by Donatello and the other Renaissance sculptors are carefully enclosed in glass cases. And the most beautiful carpet in the world is similarly concealed. Of course they make no aesthetic effect. They are valuable; and they are safe. But they might as well be locked in the vaults of the Bank of England. If we may take Russia as prophetic of the future of Europe, soon everything will be in museums. (Those of Moscow and Leningrad, I remember, are littered with hundreds of thousands of objects which might give pleasure to individual owners, but, confiscated, serve only to augment the boredom of the museum visitor.) And when every drawing, every teaspoon, more than fifty years old, has been garnered into vast public repositories, the doors, I hazard, will be closed. A prodigious, and probably conscribed, army of museum officials will spend dreary lives arranging these objects with ever increasing detestation. When every catalogue has been completed, and each specimen is in its place, a vacuum will be created that no decay will be possible. Poison gas will protect the arcane treasures from any possibility of intrusion, and the accumulated art of the world will be made safe for eternity.

The National Gallery in London is comparatively well arranged. It is not half large enough for the masterpieces it contains, but

the walls are gay and luminous. Moreover, the work of a living artist, and, what is more astonishing, a very good living artist, has been allowed within the precincts. He is not of course a painter. (Sargent is the only painter whose work was exhibited in the National Gallery, as I remember, during his life.) Boris Anrep is a mosaicist, and the old gentlemen whose protests are most falsetto when a painter forsakes exact representation, remain untroubled by the wildest distortions when the medium is mosaic. Mr Anrep is a Russian, and so an heir to the Byzantine tradition. But in the pavement he has made for the National Gallery, his technique is more Roman than Ravennese. There is wit as well as great formal beauty in his work—Exploring is symbolized by a cinematographer taking a zebra, and Archaeology by a woman reconstructing a dinosaur. Mr Anrep has previously decorated the halls of several private houses. (In one of them the bearded head of Mr Lytton Strachey peers through a casement, in another each hour in the day of a lady of fashion is represented, from the morning cocktail to the final *déshabillage*.) I think Mr Anrep is one of the best artists of our time.

This letter is rather querulous in tone. England grows daily less beautiful. One fine building after another is destroyed, and replaced by over-ornamented piles that have neither the dignity of Eighteenth Century Europe nor the audacity of Twentieth Century America. The owner of a little bicycle shop in Oxford started to manufacture automobiles a few years ago, and the Home of Lost Causes is now the Detroit of England. Yet a certain serenity is still to be found here. Cambridge is not yet the centre of a vacuum-cleaner business. The only industry of Bath is invalids. Motor-coaches crash along our lanes, but hay-carts still leave the hedges laden with their superfluity. Horses still strain up our hillsides with the plough; carters drink their ale and play cricket with the parson on the village greens. The gardens of England have never been more beautiful than they were last summer, nor did the lark and nightingale ever sing a wilder song. It needs greater courage to travel here than in Syria or Russia; the beds are harder, the food more unappetizing. But to you who love the English tongue, every stream will still speak of Arnold, every church-bell of Gray, every coppice and covert of Milton and Shakespeare.

RAYMOND MORTIMER



# BOOK REVIEWS

## SPINOZA AND HIS CORRESPONDENTS

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF SPINOZA. *Translated and edited with Introduction and Annotations by A. Wolf.* 8vo. 502 pages. Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press. \$5.

THIS edition of Spinoza's Correspondence has such a full and lucid Introduction and such adequate and valuable Annotations that it amounts to a new exposition of Spinoza's life and times. A fresh translation from the Latin and Dutch originals given in the recent Heidelberg edition of Spinoza's works has been made by Professor Wolf: the English is clear and at the same time it brings over a flavour of the seventeenth-century epistolary style. As we have them in this volume, the "letters of certain learned men to B.D.S., and the author's replies," contribute not only to "the elucidation of his other works," but they make a handbook to the mentality of the later seventeenth century. When we read them after Professor Wolf's elucidation of scientific experiments such as Boyle was making at the time, we get some immediate contact with the mentality of that age, with its smothered intellectual eagerness and its beginnings in the organization of research.

All engaged in intellectual work in those times seem to belong to a secret society. We have the impression that Spinoza and his correspondents are members of an order. He is written to as if he were a Grand Master. Precautions are observed in the writing of the letters as they were afterwards observed in the publication of them. The times were to a great extent responsible for this attitude, this tone. Scientific experiment was still associated with magic. Free speculation was not acceptable even to the most enlightened of Princes. In Holland, where Spinoza was living, the Liberals had been cast out and the Calvinistic clergy were as Calvinistic as they always have been. Still, apart from these local and temporary circumstances, intellectual effort in the



seventeenth century was prone to take the form of the secret society. Bacon's effort towards the organization of knowledge was to have been made through an "Invisible College." In Spinoza's time this "Invisible College" had been organized as the Royal Society of London. Knowledge was still regarded as something arcane, and rumour had it that Spinoza was an adept in Rosicrucianism, and that his seal—an oval ring containing a rose—was a symbol of the order.

The Spinoza of the portrait prefixed to this volume, with his fine oval face and his wide and luminous eyes, must have been a winning personality. He was an impressive personality as we know from the effect he had on men older than he—on Oldenburg, for instance. His manner of life, so becoming to a philosopher, was a wonderful recommendation of him to all who came into contact with him. But his thought was not of a kind that could be easily communicated and easily received. It is clear, indeed, that none of his correspondents had complete hold of his ideas; they were always wanting him to think along lines other than the ones that were native to his intellect. The editor of the present volume draws attention to his kindness in dealing with some of his misunderstanding correspondents—"his amazing patience with the most trying bores, his calm indifference to the tactlessness and vulgarity of others." His kindness was not invariable, however: occasionally there is tartness in his replies. And once he shows a tactlessness and a vulgarity which quite equals anything that any of his correspondents showed. This is in a letter in reply to one sent him by Albert Burgh. Burgh had been a disciple of Spinoza's, and then had become a Catholic. He wrote a letter to him that was quite unreasonable—a frenzied letter—asking the philosopher to give up his whole system of ideas and seek for the grace to become such a believer as Burgh had become. Spinoza, in his reply, gave an interpretation of Catholic doctrine that was just as monstrously misunderstanding as any interpretation that had been put upon his own philosophy. It is Spinoza who writes in this fashion about the sacrament of the Catholic Church:

"These absurdities might still be tolerated if you worshipped a God infinite and eternal, and not one whom Chastillon in the town of Tienen, as it is called by the Dutch, gave with impunity to the

horses to eat. And so you, unhappy one, weep for me? And so you call my Philosophy, which you have never seen, a chimæra? O brainless youth, who has bewitched you, so that you believe that you swallow the highest and the eternal, and that you hold it in your intestines?"

Spinoza was a great thinker, but he was, first of all, a man of faith. He considered that he had reached his beliefs through geometrical reasoning, but it is likely that his geometrical reasoning was simply a support to his faith. In this faith God was co-extensive with the world, with man's soul, and man's thought. For man's soul there was an impersonal immortality; he thought of this impersonal immortality as conditional—it was for a soul who through the knowledge and service of God had earned it. Human freedom lay in the understanding of that which was necessary and the working with it. He believed in Christ as the Logos—as one pervaded with the knowledge of God; he accepted this history of his life on earth, his passion, death, and burial, but not his resurrection. But although he believed that all that was had been ordained from eternity and that ends were a fiction of man's mind he did not think that things were moveless. As the editor of the present volume points out, Substance, or God Himself, was in Spinoza's mind, identified with power; God acted because God existed. There was need for faith and adventure in human life. "Man would perish of hunger and thirst if he did not eat nor drink until he had obtained perfect proof that food and drink would do him good." He insisted upon moral responsibility. But I for one find it difficult to discover a place in his system on which this moral responsibility might have a base. "He who is madened by the bite of a mad dog is certainly innocent," he writes, "yet anyone has the right to suffocate him. In the same way, the man who cannot govern his passions by the fear of the law is a very excusable invalid, yet he cannot enjoy peace of mind, or the knowledge of God, and it is necessary that he perish." What is implied in Spinoza's philosophy about such a misguided man is that he has strayed outside the universal order. But what one would like to know is how he had got outside it. I search the pages of Spinoza's chapters on the Divine Nature and this is all that I can find by way of enlightenment. "But to those who ask

why God has not created all men in such a manner that they might be controlled by the dictates of reason alone, I give this answer: Because to him material was not wanting for the creation of everything from the highest down to the very lowest grade of perfection; or, to speak more properly, because the laws of his nature were so ample that they sufficed for the production of everything which can be conceived by an infinite intellect, as I have demonstrated." This is the answer of a man who has faith in the value of God's creation, faith in the value of human personality, and who backed his faith, not with reason, but with dogma. The faith that Spinoza possessed had appeared in the world before; the early Church had treated it as a heresy.

The later seventeenth century had for its intellectual heroes Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz. Descartes' and Leibnitz' ideas have had a real influence upon the European mind. Spinoza's, for all their completeness, have had little or none. Leibnitz, in the age that followed, had his sound philosophical idea parodied by Voltaire, and we are made laugh at Dr Pangloss with his notion of being alive in the best time in the best of all possible worlds. Leibnitz could be parodied because he was a present influence. But Voltaire could not parody Spinoza's reconciliation of freedom with necessity—that notion had not been brought into the European mind. Descartes gave Catholicism a new intellectual centre, and his consolidation, so to speak, of the intellectual and the moral life is a living influence to-day. Leibnitz strove for a Europe in which Catholics and Protestants could live and let live and in which Germany might have peace through a French expansion in Egypt. Spinoza remained apart from all such activities. An enlightened prince offered him a chair in a university from which he could make his political ideas—especially his ideas on tolerance of opinions—current. He refused to take the place offered. It turned out that it was well he made the refusal, for a year later the French closed the university in which he might have been lecturing—the University of Heidelberg. One cannot say of so wise a man that he did not act for the best. But one recognizes in Spinoza a man of refusals. A great thinker he certainly was. His thought interpreted an austere and noble faith, but a faith that Christian Europe could draw very little from. It was the romantic poets, Lessing and Goethe, Coleridge and Wordsworth, who made Spinoza a Euro-

pean figure. And it was fitting that it was they who did this for in his philosophy there is an austere poetry. "Joy is the passage to a greater perfection, Sorrow the passage to a lesser perfection." This is poetry, of course, not philosophy. And in one of his letters to a correspondent, to Blyenberg, I read a passage which again is not philosophy, but a high kind of philosophical poetry. "Therefore since the pious have incalculably more perfection than the ungodly, their virtue cannot be compared with that of the ungodly because the ungodly lack the love of God which springs from the knowledge of Him, and whereby alone we, according to our human understanding, are said to be the servants of God. Indeed, since they know not God, they are no more than a tool in the hand of the master which serves unconsciously, and perishes in the service; on the other hand, the pious serve consciously, and become more perfect by their service."

PADRAIC COLUM

## ORLANDO

ORLANDO. By Virginia Woolf. 10mo. 333 pages.  
Harcourt Brace and Company. \$3.

THAT Mrs Woolf is a highly ingenious writer has been made glitteringly obvious for us in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*<sup>1</sup>: which is not in the least to minimize the fact that those two novels also contained a great deal of beauty. That she is, and has perhaps always been, in danger of carrying ingenuity too far, is suggested, among other things, by her new novel, or "biography," *Orlando*. Whatever else one thinks about this book, one is bound to admit that it is exceedingly, not to say disconcertingly, clever. In England as well as in America it has set the critics by the ears. They have not known quite how to take it—whether to regard it as a biography, or a satire on biography; as a history, or a satire on history; as a novel, or as an allegory. And it is at once clear, when one reads *Orlando*, why this confusion should have arisen; for the tone of the book, from the very first pages, is a tone of mockery. Mrs Woolf has expanded a *jeu d'esprit* to the length of a novel. One might almost say, in fact—when one notes in the index that there are precisely seven references to "The Oak" (a poem which plays an important part in the story—and which in a sense is almost its ghostly protagonist) and when one recalls that Knole, a famous English house, is at Sevenoaks, (clearly the house described in the novel) that *Orlando* is a kind of colossal pun. More exactly, one might compare it with *Alice in Wonderland*; for if the latter is an inspired dream, organized with a logic almost insanely unswerving, so the former is a kind of inspired joke, a joke charged with meanings, in which the logic, if not quite so meticulous, is at any rate pressing.

There is thus an important element of "spoof" in *Orlando*: Mrs Woolf apparently wants us to know that she does not herself take the thing with the last seriousness—that she is pulling legs, keeping her tongue in her cheek, and winking, now and then, a quite shameless and enormous wink. With all this, which she accomplishes with a skill positively equestrian, she is obliged, perforce, to fall into

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed in *THE DIAL*, July, 1927.

a style which one cannot help feeling is a little unfortunate. It is a style which makes fun of style: it is glibly rhetorical, glibly sententious, glibly poetic, glibly analytical, glibly austere, by turns—deliberately so; and while this might be, and is, extraordinarily diverting for a chapter or two, or for something like the length of a short story, one finds it a little fatiguing in a full-length book. Of course, Mrs Woolf's theme, with its smug annihilation of time, may be said to have demanded, if the whole question of credibility was to be begged, a tone quite frankly and elaborately artificial. Just the same, it is perhaps questionable whether she has not been too icily and wreathedly elaborate in this, and taken her Orlando in consequence a shade too far towards an arid and ingenious convention. Granted that what she wanted to tell us was a fable, or allegory: that she wanted to trace the aesthetic evolution of a family (and by implication that of a country) over a period of three hundred years: and that she had hit upon the really first-rate idea of embodying this racial evolution in one undying person: need she quite so much have presumed on our incredulity? One suspects that in such a situation an ounce of ingenuousness might be worth ten times its weight in ingenuity; and that a little more of the direct and deep sincerity of the last few pages, which are really beautiful and really moving, might have made Orlando a minor masterpiece.

As it is, it is an extremely amusing and brilliant *tour de force*. It is as packed with reference, almost, as *The Waste Land*. Some of the references, it is true, are too esoteric—for one not in the enchanted circle—to be universally valid; and this may or may not be thought a mistake. One's private jokes and innuendoes are pretty apt to become meaningless, with the passage of time and the disappearance of the *milieu* which gave them point. This, again, is of a piece with Mrs Woolf's general air of high spirits; of having a lark; of going, as it were, on an intellectual spree; and that there is far too little of this spirit in contemporary literature we can cheerfully admit. But here too one feels inclined to enter a protest. For the idea, as has been said, is first-rate, an idea from which a poet might have evoked a profusion of beauty as easily as the djinn was released from his bottle. Mrs Woolf does indeed give us a profusion of beauty and wisdom: but it is beauty and wisdom of a very special sort. Her roses are cloth roses, her scenes are scenes from a tapestry, her "wisdom" (that is, her shrewd and very feminine com-



ments on men and things) has about it an air of florid and cynical frigidity, a weariness wrought into form; as if—to change the image—she were stringing for her own entertainment a necklace of beautifully polished platitudes. If only—one thinks—she could have brought an Elizabethan freshness to this admirable theme—if she could have worked her mine a little deeper, a little more honestly, a little less for diversion's sake, and a little more for poetry's; and if, finally, she were not quite so civilized, in the Kensington Gardens sense of the word, or so burdened with sophistication, or could admit now and then, if for only a moment, a glimpse into the sheer horror of things, the chaos that yawns under Bloomsbury—but then this book would not have been the charming *jeu d'esprit* that it is; it would have been something else.

CONRAD AIKEN



## A TRAGEDIAN OF SENTIENCE

THE EARLY LIFE OF THOMAS HARDY (1840-1891).  
By Florence Emily Hardy. 8vo. 327 pages. The  
Macmillan Company. \$5.

WINTER WORDS IN VARIOUS MOODS AND METRES.  
By Thomas Hardy. 16mo. 184 pages. The Mac-  
millan Company. \$2.

NOT particularly dramatic or even emphatic, Mrs Hardy's life of Hardy is still far from being a chronicle of minor matters. The reader is impressed rather with the number of central questions it answers, the number of things which in an unpretentious and unhurried way it makes clear. Very much in Hardy's own words in its latter parts, in fact, it acquires the effect of autobiography, and in particular emphasizes the justice of his protests—of which there is another and last one in the preface to *Winter Words*—against the label of pessimist which was perpetually being applied to him.

He was, as his appreciators of course know, nothing so cheap as a pessimist, but it perhaps needed some such long and level record of his days as this is, to exhibit his fundamental simplicity and sincerity. What the chief pursuits of his mind and temperament really were, that they were much less in some ways and much more in others than the complicated concerns of the novelist, Mrs Hardy's narrative does a good deal to make clear. It will now perhaps not do to think that he "took up" poetry as the consequence of his breach with the public over *Jude the Obscure*. Now it may be apropos to see that he could not have thus taken up poetry, for the reason that he had never put it down, for the reason that it was a good deal more integral with what he ultimately and powerfully was than novel writing.

The point was not that he wrote poetry, and much of it, before or after or during the period of his fiction. It was that his very notes for fiction, in which the biography abounds, seem really the notes of a tragic poet. It was that his very uneasiness at the outset of his career as a novelist was a result of poetic preoccupa-

tions amid the business of prose. It was, as Mrs Hardy suggests, in words recalling his own, that he was confronted then with the necessity of "having to carry on his life not as an emotion but as a scientific game; he was committed by circumstances to novel writing as a regular trade, as much as he had formerly been to architecture, and hence he would have to look for material in manners,—in ordinary social and fashionable life as other novelists did. Yet he took no interest in manners, but in the substance of life only."

Possibly all this could have been inferred from the novels by this "novelist of lucidity and strength." The great Wessex narratives certainly, have a depth of tone that the reader is not accustomed to in fiction, and more persons than one perhaps could have agreed with Coventry Patmore's view that the substance of life contained in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was essentially poetry. In a letter to Hardy quoted by Mrs Hardy, Patmore "regretted at almost every page (of the tale) that such unequalled beauty and power should not have assured themselves the immortality which would have been impressed upon them by the form of verse."

Still, other readers of other of the novels might not be so affected. Yet even so, there is still testimony as to the depth of poetry in Hardy, testimony made accessible by the present narrative. It seems clear for instance, that his manner of settling his conflicts in novel writing was simply to make as few concessions against his own feeling as might be, or perhaps none at all in his major tales, concerning himself strictly with the substance of life, even in the teeth of convention. And when rupture with the public came, one gathers, though the narrative of the present volume does not actually extend so far, he still made no concessions, but turned to wholly poetic concerns—with what was perhaps less of turning than might have seemed.

It is apparent from the biography, and without rhetoric or artifice, that he did carry on his life as an emotion. Doubtless one may not grasp or state very much of what this means. Yet reflections of it seem clear enough in the poems and novels, and the effects of it on the external course of his existence are in several cases made clear through the care of his biographer. Various readers may variously regard, in the poems, his frequently arbitrary extremities in phrase and metre, yet every reader must find in them something impressive and unmistakable and cannot deny

that they are massively felt. In the novels what has been so much praised as composition and design is at least as much chargeable to the power with which they have been felt in all their details as to anything that might be called deliberate in foresight or calculated in plan.

The effects on the career of Thomas Hardy might possibly be considered the real theme of the biography, for it makes him clear at once, and throughout, as almost such a sensitive dweller in solitude as Hawthorne was—not wholly "averse to society," if one may apply to him one of his own descriptions, though it is remarkable how many of his contemporaries he succeeded in not meeting. "During part of his residence at Westbourne Park Villas," (1861-1867; ages 21-27), Mrs Hardy writes, "he was living within half a mile of Swinburne, and hardly more than a stone's throw from Browning, to whom introductions would not have been difficult through literary friends of Blomfield (his employer). He might have obtained at least encouragement from these, and if he had cared, possibly have floated some of his poems in a small volume. But such a proceeding seems never to have crossed his mind." And while later he and his wife became accustomed to spending some months of nearly every year in London, where they moved, somewhat gingerly one gathers, among the "social and fashionable," still such occasions were unnatural to him and unprofitable, as the biography and perhaps his novels also make evident. His real inclinations on the point of mingling with his fellows, or at least the more sophisticated of them, might not unreasonably be symbolized in the episode of his tree planting. No sooner was the building of his house complete at Max Gate than he set about planting around it, with his own hands, "some two or three thousand small trees, mostly Austrian pines," which "grew so thickly that the house was almost entirely screened from the road, and finally appeared in summer as if at the bottom of a dark green well of trees."

Not remarkable in themselves, such incidents are shown by the remainder of the biography as parts of things more significant in consequence. There are passages of Hardy's memoranda which might well be taken as the obverse, or in a sense as explanation of the greatness in his novels and poems; which, from the interior as it might seem, hint at what sensibility may be, raised to its heights, and what its price is. They show perhaps that Hardy's

habit of solitude was, not unlike Hawthorne's, an unconscious or conscious means of detachment from destructive agitations, an avenue of evasion from the too sheer plunge of feeling. "For my part," he writes, rather curiously, in 1887, "if there is any way of getting a melancholy satisfaction out of life it lies in dying, so to speak, before one is out of the flesh . . . putting on the manners of ghosts, wandering in their haunts, and taking their views of surrounding things. To think of life as passing is sadness; to think of it as past is at least tolerable. Hence even when I enter a room to pay a simple morning call I have unconsciously the habit of regarding the scene as if I were a spectre not solid enough to influence my environment; only fit to behold and say, as another spectre said: 'Peace be unto you!'"

These odd sentences are again something which one can understand only with the roughest of approximation. Mrs Hardy describes the memorandum as "whimsical," and no doubt there is in it something of Hardy's original and unassertive humour. Yet one can scarcely believe it is not also significant of at least one important mode of his temperament. And the idea perhaps is reinforced by transcripts afforded from his memoranda on the themes which he finally embodied in his Napoleonic epic, *The Dynasts*. From 1875 to 1891, the terminus of the present volume, the reader finds him again and again recurring to such projects as "A Ballad of the Hundred Days," or "An Iliad of Europe," or "a study of humanity" in which it is shown to be "a great network or tissue," or "A Drama of the Times of the First Napoleon." All these were closely related notions in his mind, and it is not without some importance surely, that as they grew toward their considerable final proportions, and he felt need of generalizing them, the method that occurred to him was one with which he was already familiar in other applications. "I require a larger canvas," he first notes, and then—"A spectral tone must be adopted. . . . Royal Ghosts . . . Title: A Drama of Kings."

Perhaps any such conclusions are a too explicit forcing of inference. But however that may be, the strength of the present biography is sufficiently apparent in its consistency with what one can infer from the Wessex novels and the great poems. It is only the account of an unadventurous and even uneventful career. Yet perusal of its pages at any length ought to persuade the reader that here moves quietly about its concerns the same sensitivity, the

same depth of compassion for men, for indeed all things alive, as could dictate such passages in the novels as Marty South's monologue over the grave of Giles Winterborne, or such stanzas in the poems as this, from one of his last:

"I am the one whom ringdoves see  
Through chinks in boughs  
When they do not rouse  
In sudden dread,  
But stay on cooing, as if they said:  
'Oh; it is only he.'"

There was surely nothing of *self*-consciousness about such a sensibility. It seems rather a self-less form of intuition into the heart of things. It was the voice of a temperament which marked the fall of sparrows, and could compose choruses for the least tragedies of sentience.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

## THE TRAGIC NINETIES

A VARIETY OF THINGS. By Max Beerbohm. 10mo.  
268 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

AMONG the mental attitudes that the mechanization and standardization of our era has succeeded in crushing out is that of the Sentimental Epicure. How much of Watteau, how much of Sterne and Rousseau, lingers in the petulant and whimsical soul of Max Beerbohm may be hard to determine; but of a surety these re-published papers, under the modest title *A Variety of Things*, strike us as coming from an age almost as far off and remote from ours, as the age of periwigs and snuff-boxes! The great Caricaturist steps gingerly along our pavements. Is it not strange that the airy reactions to the bagatelles of life in this courtly *revenant* should strike us as having an almost antiquarian interest?

But if any human mood has ever, as we now say, been "dated," it is surely the aesthetic sentimentality, tempered by blasphemy, of the dissipated "Nineties." But how conscious they were in those days as to how their gestures would affect the Public; and how remote from any Public nowadays are our own scientific Joyces and Eliots! The "old eternal candours," as Francis Thompson calls them, were, if only for blasphemy's sake, the very pabulum of this wilful, this subjective generation.

The truth is—if one may breathe it at last—they themselves were much more like their great philistine Public than the exclusive legend about them allowed for! They were at any rate quite as sentimental as that Public. And how much "body," when one encounters their mood again in a volume like this, does literature seem to have sacrificed in removing itself from "the common dream" and becoming so obscure, so savage, so accurate, so precise! Our modern wit falls as coldly glittering now as the propellers of our aeroplanes, when compared with this lovely sub-aqueous iridescence of pseudo-evil!

Wherein, one asks, lies the secret of this singular difference? Does it not lie in the absence from the temper of our modern



Exquisites of a certain fundamental respect for personality? Mechanical inventions have de-humanized the court-jesters of our gasoline-driven generation. Iron and steel and electricity have sharpened the nihilism of our mischief till its very arrows are no longer cut from the tree of life, no longer made from wood through which the sap has flowed!

In *The Deadful Dragon* and *A Stranger in Venice*, the best pastels in this volume, the old-world sentimentality is never very far away. One dallies indeed with the disturbing thought that for the compounding of those rare "simples" that go to form the epicurean view of life a certain personal dignity is required. Certainly there is needed a crafty use of the margins of a large leisure!

One of the most interesting essays in this collection deals seriously enough, though in a playful setting, with the technique of Caricature. One instantly places Max Beerbohm among his true contemporaries by the contents of this subtle exposition of his whole-hearted method. It is Henry James's own great word, "saturation," applied to a sister-art. It is indeed this easy, leisurely, casual imbibing of the whole atmosphere of a living personality—as if it were a landscape, a city, a country—that distinguishes that era's approach to any personal subject. Here Beerbohm is entirely a child of that *fin de siècle*. Not one of that group but put "life" above professionalism! He himself is a connoisseur of the world first, an artist afterwards; just as Lionel Johnson was Catholic first, poet afterwards; Wilde, Beardsley, Dowson, desperadoes of sensation first; and all the rest afterwards!

That Beardsley himself belonged to another epoch than ours has been most delicately proved in Yeats's fascinating "memorabilia"; for when the latter suggested to the former that his more obscene drawings were "actuated by rage against iniquity," Beardsley replied that, if they *had* been, they would have been exactly the same!

When one recalls the astounding genius of certain of the Beerbohm caricatures—"W. B. Yeats," for instance, "introducing George Moore to the Queen of the Fairies"; "The Poet Laureate reading the Idylls of the King to his Sovereign," "Walt Whitman encouraging the American Eagle to soar," or that masterpiece among them all, Mrs Humphrey Ward, in childish pig-tails, ask-



ing her famous uncle "whether he can *ever* be serious?"—and compares these things with the work, in the same genre, of any of our contemporaries, does one not feel that the superiority after all draws its triumphant zest from the fact that Max Beerbohm *loved* his victims?

One begins indeed to divine as true, what one has long secretly suspected—namely that, with all their chatter about "art," these perverse subjectivists of the Nineties concealed a sound popular instinct as to the relation between aesthetics and "real" life.

As we read here what Max Beerbohm says about Venice, as we catch the intense preoccupation of this lover of "unreal beauty"—this beauty of "Masks and mirrors" of which Wilde was always murmuring—we realize that to be an authentic *amateur of life* it is necessary to respond with once-born, heart-whole adoration to those falling lights and sinking tones and wandering odours of the shrines of our wayward pilgrimage.

Our own jazz-bemused generation has made of the figure of Max Beerbohm an extravagant Myth, re-fashioning him after our own image. This mythical Max has a devilish flippancy that would make Lord Chesterfield gasp. But the real Beerbohm, revealed to us in these pages, is the Great Amateur, whose courtly progress through "the art-centres of Europe" drops, like the gilded travelling coach of any "Milord Anglais" of the old time, such a largesse of solid gold pieces that the mouth of the "comic spirit" is left gaping.

It would almost seem, as these ill-fated contributors to The Yellow Book and to The Savoy—"that organ," as AE calls it, "of the Incubi and the Succubi"—crowd in upon our memory, as though it had needed some invisible chain-armour to protect the lucky survivors from those "dark angels," those "airy shrouds," those "prophets of despair," that beckoned Wilde and Johnson and Davidson and Dowson to so pitiful a doom.

Certainly neither The Yellow Book nor The Savoy would have been anything without the "dark angel" of Beardsley's possessed pen-point; but the whole strange breviary of that epoch would have lost a certain chemical pigment necessary to its illumination, had Max Beerbohm's praise of "Cosmetics" and such-like trifles been omitted from its heraldic gonfalon of offence!

As one's mind searches hopelessly among modern wits for any-

thing comparable to the honeyed mischief of Beerbohm's literary style—is it going too far to suggest that our genial contemporary Mr McBride comes nearest to it?—one asks oneself pointedly and plainly whether the pathos of the whole difference is not found in the fact that these singular men gave unblushing and shameless expression to their human *sentimentality*?

There has been, from time immemorial, an intimate association between fantastic humour and unbridled sentiment. The author of *The Sentimental Journey* is the grand example of this. But, except for the art of Charlie Chaplin, it has become the fashion with our cleverer writers to disdain that easy dramatic appeal to the common man's sensibility, whether sympathetic or hostile, which made the perverse preciosity of the Nineties an almost popular achievement. Joyce and Lewis, Eliot and Pound, with all their differences and reciprocities, are remote, as the learned Renaissance Scholars were remote, from any sentimental subjectivity such as the man in the street can at least *understand*, however much he may detest it. Thus the sudden re-appearance of the great petulant figure of Max Beerbohm must have, for many simple minds among us, the effect of a stately Roman Candle introduced at a Guy Fawkes gaudy night, dissolving in beautifully clear colours as it falls through the air, and making the mommets of our pyrotechnic celebration seem like dusky hobgoblins!

The mere fact that such a man as this—"the prince of ironists," as we glibly call him—should publish at all and without a flicker of compunction his *Stranger in Venice*, a fragment that is nothing less than a muted dithyramb of impassioned idolatry, is something that may well startle us. Why! It has the naïveté, the freedom from cynicism, of a young girl's diary. Strange indeed to contrast this Venice of the sentimental English traveller with the Venice of Thomas Mann's tragic tale.

Two more Imaginary Portraits, limned in the well-known manner, enter with this volume that sacred gallery of verbal oil-paintings that the admirers of our Caricaturist cherish so devotedly. Max Beerbohm's partiality for this singular genre is in itself sufficiently illuminating. One doubts whether, in our objective era, the passion for personality is strong enough to hold up without hopeless weariness the mirror of analysis to an *invented* human countenance.

The Nineties loved to project upon their magic-lantern screen some *excessive personality* strained through a crucible of fantastic religion. A desperate mysticity, at once christian and cabalistical, seems to burn behind their genteel masks, like a wax candle behind a tasselled drawing-room curtain!

The best way to get these "perfect sentimentalists" into historic perspective is to recognize how anti-political as well as anti-scientific their humanism was. The great, massive, four-square Mid-Victorians had parliamentary sociological-ethical minds. Our own contemporaries fling their very souls before the wheels of de-personalized science.

But every man of those tragic Nineties—and perhaps this is why they *were* tragic—asserted his private fantastic life-illusion in superb contempt for the impersonalities of both ethics and science. Nothing is more piquant than to suddenly be confronted by a great age that is dead; resuscitated in a living book. A Variety of Things cannot be called a startling contribution to English literature. It may even prove to some among us as "unexciting" as the proud, suave deprecation of the preface hints. But there is "more than meets the eye" in a book like this for those who are old enough to have been young in the tragic Nineties. It was as he travelled, in what we call in England "the Guard's Van," in company with a pedigree pointer-bitch, from Portsmouth to Salisbury, that the present writer read in his paper of Wilde's downfall. "Exciting" indeed was that famous trial—Caesar's purple falling, on those Old Bailey steps, to close an epoch in history—and it is because the voices of so many ill-fated poets return upon one's ear as one reads these sketches that this volume stands apart from others, from far more lively *jeux d'esprit*. "Unexciting" in itself it may be. It has the power of reversing the irrevocable wheels!

JOHN COWPER POWYS

## AMBIGUOUS PERFECTION

SENECA: *Moral Essays. Volume I. With an English Translation by John W. Basore. 16mo. 456 pages. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50.*

SUPPOSING that at the inception of the Loeb Library (and there have been, in its own kind "many worse, better few" inceptions) a meeting of persons competent to take part in the scheme and equal in number to the proposed subjects had been held? Then let the reader, further supposing himself to be one of these select persons, ask that self whether he would choose for his share L. Annaeus Seneca—not chronologically or genealogically but in rank and fame first of a family unusually distinguished in various ways. The present writer certainly would *not*: though he does not in so saying mean to throw the slightest discredit on Dr Basore's choice or on his execution. Undoubtedly Seneca had to be done; in a certain way the obligation considering the special objects of the Library—to assist and ease familiarity with ancient literature in the case of those who are not entirely at home with it in its original forms—was exceptionally pressing. Seneca is not a very great writer; indeed there is a sort of clumsy pomp about his style which one does not envy the translator in his task of rendering: and except in the "skit" of the Apocolocyntosis or pumpkinification of Claudius (which is not quite certainly his and which is not here) he is the reverse of amusing. The undoubtedly rather striking life—its escape from the insane tyranny of Caligula; its long exile in Corsica (no Roman had any sense of the picturesque, and every Roman was as unhappy out of Rome as a Frenchman is out of Paris): its extraordinary exaltation and enrichment in the early days of Nero; and its end, if not exactly in "the *high* Roman fashion," in a clumsy and tragi-farcical parody thereof—has only an accidental connexion with literature.

But Seneca's *influence*, both on literature and on life, has been enormous. We are not now concerned with that very singular phenomenon, the way in which a handful of tragedies—again not

certainly his and themselves hardly of second-rate merit—revolutionized nearly the whole of their kind for a longer or shorter period in Europe. Our own proper subject here—the Moral Essays—not yet wholly given, has exercised, directly and through some of the Christian fathers, influence far greater and never quite interrupted till recently over the whole western world. At the moment and to the average reader this may seem an exaggeration: nor could he be expected to give the time necessary to have it proved to him or for him to prove it to himself: but it is at worst a little extra emphasis laid on a simple truth.

It is true also that the moral essay, as such, has been “going, going, gone” in England at any rate (it may have kept up a little longer in America but I am not entitled to speak on that) since the eighteenth century. It has of course kept a hold on the sermon and on some other forms of utterance such as that rather queer thing, twentieth and later nineteenth century “philosophy.” But the genuine “moral essay” of the not directly theological kind—the discourse which might be ticketed “telling a man how he ought and ought not to behave himself”—has become a little obsolete. Whether this is because all men are quite sure that they know all about it, or for other and equally obvious reasons, does not here matter. But there was a time, and a very long time when they apparently did care to be told: and the matter before us gives a considerable supply of the material which apparently satisfied their demands for intelligence, instruction, and the like.

It may possibly be because so large a part of the subject has passed into or has been taken as having passed into the hands of the clergy that it has ceased to be handled much by laymen. As for Seneca himself it is easy to find fault with him. Caligula was certainly one of the most detestable persons who ever existed, but it could hardly have been necessary to make him an “awful example” so many times that one cannot help thinking of the fact that Seneca himself had only escaped that Emperor’s detestableness by a sort of accident. It may be said that gratitude is due to the teachers, clerical and lay, who have made things like the following seem banalities. “You can escape the dangers of a court by accepting injuries and returning thanks for them.” “Anger aims at nothing ample and beautiful.” A sort of general code which no doubt Seneca helped to form—seems to have provided for all these

things. Of course the code alters. When Lucius Annaeus exclaims, "Some men are mad enough to suppose that even a woman can offer them an insult," some men *of us* would say, "Well, certainly she can: provided that we put her in such a position that she may." And these things afford the opportunity for a very interesting "History of Morals" in the wide sense.

But apart from this comparative view, or, as an adjunct again to historical accounts of times and seasons, of countries and nations, this kind became somewhat jejune. It is even questionable whether the invention of the novel, anticipated as it was by the epic and the romance, has not made them rather useless. Heroes and heroines in action and speech can do the sort of thing much more interestingly and tellingly than a sort of amateur Professor either with or without a desire to pay off old scores on a dead and probably when alive mad Caesar, and to keep in order another who, unless his preceptor had smaller insight into human nature than should equip an ordinary schoolmaster, must almost certainly take the wrong turning.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY



## BRIEFER MENTION

**THE NEW TEMPLE**, by Johan Bojer, translated from the Norwegian by C. Archer (12mo, 341 pages; Century: \$2.50) has the cadence of a poem of faith; one reads it as one might listen to the tones of an organ in the distance. By the simplest of effects it attains eloquence, and by the gentlest of pressure it exerts power. This story of four people and their search for the meaning of life is so free from artifice that one is caught unawares in the sweep of its climax, with its humble yet unforgettable beauty. Many novelists have been drawn to the theme which underlies this novel—the enduring and mystic power of faith—but few sustain it with the unassuming yet ample grace which one discovers here.

**A TALE OF ROSAMUND GRAY AND OLD BLIND MARGARET**, by Charles Lamb, with introduction by R. Brimley Johnson (16mo, 71 pages; Golden Cockerel Press, London) emerges from a kindly oblivion to the warmth of a passing curiosity. Shelley exclaimed, "How much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest part of our nature is in it!"—but one doubts whether the poet's transports will evoke a modern echo. The tale's grandiose sentimentality seems excessive even for its mood and its times. Its saintly emphasis hovers precariously near the border of the sanctimonious. Such interest as it possesses is that of the literary relic.

**MOSES**, by Louis Untermeyer (12mo, 390 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2.50) is a curiously muffled performance, as though there remained a thick wall between the intent of the novelist and the perception of the reader. The incisive qualities which distinguish Mr Untermeyer as a poet have been unwisely laid aside; the underbrush of prose is pathless and seems to lead to no clearing of thought. The book has eloquence without being moving, and drama which fails to quicken the pulse. There is not a careless line in it from start to finish; one can but regret that the result is not commensurate with the high endeavour.

**THE CHILDREMASS, Part I**, by Wyndham Lewis (8vo, 322 pages; Covici, Friede: \$3). Tilting afresh at James Joyce, Einstein, and other modern spiritual antagonists, Mr Lewis, in his mystical swashbuckler vein, hunts here a new "Snark," in the form of the bi-sexual infantilism of our luckless era. His racy Rabelaisianism puts a lively sap and a roguish tang into a metaphysical antinomy concerning Time and Space beyond the reach of modern intelligences. His boy-men heroes, Satters and Pullman, behaving with an epicene jocularly (like clowns in an old-fashioned Pantomime) are witnesses, at the gates of Heaven, of a ferocious verbal tournament between "the Bailiff," representing this bastard "Time," and "Hyperides," representing Greek aesthetics, the objectivity of Space and (incidentally) the author himself! Part Two of this railing fantasy will doubtless conduct these protagonists into Heaven.



**THE BUCK IN THE SNOW** and Other Poems, by Edna St Vincent Millay (12mo, 69 pages; Harper's: \$2). Miss Millay has a large following. Poets are too few in America. The impulse is to seize every opportunity to boom the trade. In any case, Miss Millay has an undoubted gift. There would be no great harm to the cause of letters, perhaps, if one were to join ecstatically in the chorus of praise. Yet, secretly, one wishes *The Buck in the Snow* to be less clever, to be less *voulu*, to be less written because one has been advertised as a poet and therefore some poetry has been expected of one. "O April, full of blood, full of breath, have pity on us!" is one of the lines.

**THE IMPORTUNED**, by Sylvia Townsend Warner (12mo, 88 pages; Viking Press: \$2). If it is true that "poets write the best prose," it is certainly proved in this little collection that a witty prose-writer's poetry can be more arresting than the work of many a professional. One notes with satisfaction the influence of Hardy in the verses entitled *Self Heal*, *The Rival*, and *The Visit*. Indeed so marked by a quaint, incisive, and wistful tenderness are these pastoral-philosophical sketches, that one feels that it is from a perusal not only of Hardy, but of Virgil, that the author of Mr. Fortune's Maggot turns poet.

**THE LOST LYRIST**, by Elizabeth Hollister Frost (8vo, 96 pages; Harper's: \$2). These poems reflect one's sense of nature's unimplicated aspect when one's primary sensation is of "pain, that puts out brighter pain", and an absorbed somnambulistic instinct for tracing perceptibly what is unperceived by any but one's self. The reader doubts the poetic rightness of certain impulsive comparisons of the temporal with the eternal, but is aware of the assembling eye, of a sometimes engagingly unanticipated lyric succinctness, and is deeply impressed by the enquiring note of loneliness.

**TRAVELING LIGHT**, by M. H. Harrigan (16mo, 287 pages; maps; Brentano's: \$2) is "a practical guide for economical people" going to Spain and Morocco. Practically it is excellent. On page 2 occurs the statement "the Spaniard of both high and low degree is uniformly polite and obliging" which, in connexion with a later statement, would indicate that, dependable as the book is respecting trains, routes, rates, and the like, it was conceived about 1830. The other statement is about "pictures by El Greco more precious than gold"—virtually all that is said about this painter after three pages devoted to praise of Velasquez.

**A BOOK ABOUT PARIS**, by George and Pearl Adam (8vo, 192 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$5) strives to interpret the city in the light of French character rather than to explain it by tourist intuition. It omits all except the unavoidable repetitions imposed by the circumstance that it covers the same ground which has been surveyed many times before, and concentrates on material which is overlooked by the superficial. The city's historical background is sketched in without loss of momentum, and French politics and politicians are shrewdly appraised. In a word, a book whose timeliness is not dependent upon wisdom gleaned at bars and cabarets.

PARIS SALONS, CAFÉS, STUDIOS, by Sisley Huddleston (8vo, 366 pages; Lip-pincott: \$5). Mr Huddleston is better than most journalists but still a journalist. That is to say, he doesn't write any too well and he doesn't see too deeply into the writings of those who do write well but he has a keen sense of the material that makes life a pageant for the sojourners in Paris, and lists it very completely. All the types that figure in smart gossip are held up to view. Boni de Castellane, Josephine Baker, Paul Valéry, André Gide, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Marcel Proust are among the half-million present. Marcel Proust, in fact, is rather held responsible, in the serious last chapter of summing-up, for the sex-pathology that modish writers now confront you with at every turn and which gives such a disconcerting tone to the period.

OLD MASTERS AND MODERN ART—France and England, by Sir Charles Holmes (8vo, 314 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$7.50) is the third and concluding volume in the notable survey of painting undertaken by the director of the National Gallery. It is a solid and informed work, somewhat judicial in tone, and characterized by a scholarly sincerity in its appraisal of values. Art only attains its truest expression, he believes, by adhering to national ideals, founded on the "racial and individual instinct" of the artist. He voices—like a true Englishman—his opposition to "the gospel of cosmopolitanism so fashionable in the studios of today," the fruits of which are bound to be insipid and insincere. "We must speak the faith that is in us, and nothing else," is his parting admonition.

LETIZIA BONAPARTE, by Clement Shaw (12mo, 176 pages; Representative Women Series, Viking Press: \$2). In his fear of being dull or obvious Mr Shaw sometimes sacrifices clarity and orderliness for the elliptical and the lively. The portrait of Madame Bonaparte that in the end emerges lacks, one feels, the full breadth and flavour latent in the subject. In the last chapter one is shown how able a master of biography the author can be when he is neither hurried nor self-conscious, and is not dominated by the dread of repeating what has been said before.

LAFAYETTE, by Joseph Delteil (8vo, 212 pages; Minton, Balch: \$3.50). "Something geometrical in all perfection chills." This dictum is Mr Delteil's own, yet in the face of it he turns to biography and achieves—or seeks to achieve—perfection in rhapsody. Biography being in its nature somewhat geometrical, a lowering of temperature in this instance is not surprising. There are moments when Lafayette seems to draw his life's blood from his biographer's literary veins. Elsewhere, when Mr Delteil permits the inherent drama of events to set the pace of his pen, his pages have a glow and intensity not to be denied. The description of Lafayette's first and greatest adventure—his participation in the American Revolution—is richly imaginative, a mingling of *staccato* and *bravura* passages most effectively contrived. By applying the same technique to phases of the French patriot's career played in another key, Mr Delteil weakens the whole composition. To which criticism he doubtless will reply—the words are in his preface—"Have I depicted Lafayette as he was? I have depicted him as I like him, anyway."

**A-RAFTING ON THE MISSISSIP'**, by Charles Edward Russell (10mo, 357 pages; Century: \$3.50). The normally tranquil but occasionally riotous Father of Waters finds itself experiencing a considerable *accelerando* of literary interest. Several recent novels have been launched on its muddy bosom; Lyle Saxon has depicted its history dramatically, and now Mr Russell comes forward with an interesting volume focused upon the lives and activities of raftsmen and pilots. To write a historical narrative about a river is not a task which one is likely to assume without an inborn predilection, in itself a guarantee that the subject will have sympathetic treatment. This attribute Mr Russell possesses, and to it he has added much research and the equipment of a seasoned writer. The result is a work of unflagging interest and richness of incident.

**SHANTY IRISH**, by Jim Tully (12mo, 292 pages; A. & C. Boni: \$2.50) has the authentic bitter taste of remembered poverty. Mr Tully does not sweeten the dose, but throws in now and then a little colouring-matter—which is permissible. He sets down the barren despair of "shanty" existence, its bare-knuckled ugliness, its brawls, and its rollicking bar-room interludes. The portrait of his grandfather Old Hughie, who "ever remained the strongest oak in the blighted forest of the Tullys," is the finest of all—a sketch of Rabelaisian zest and proportions. Asked why he took no part in the Civil War, he snapped: "If ye are in a strange nayborhood, ye don't take sides—Ireland is me country—an' by the help of God may I niver see it agin!" Mr Tully takes a savage joy in burying the stereotyped romantic Irishman, and then slapping his grave with a spade—which he *calls* a spade.

**ON MY WAY**, by Art Young (8vo, 303 pages; Horace Liveright: \$4) is a series of marginal notes on life, as trenchant and illuminating as the drawings which have taken shape under the same hand. The artist's autobiography assumes the form of a diary—not of events, but of reminiscences; it is a flexible medium which ignores the conventional barriers between writer and reader. Art Young's philosophy of living is as free from fussy embellishment as his cartoons—"That Rembrandt died poor and Van Dyck rich means nothing except that one died poor and the other rich. . . . Nothing is important but what we do and how well we do it." His appraisal of men and events is kindly, humorous, undogmatic. His attitude toward his work carries the note of sincerity unmarred by overtones of pose or professionalism.

**FORGOTTEN LADIES**, by Richardson Wright (8vo, 307 pages; Lippincott: \$5). Not literature but good entertainment. It would have been an indictable offence years ago to have saddled such dubious heroines on the fair history of the country, but times have changed and now we must laugh even if we laugh at ourselves. One or two of these "true tales" leave a nostalgic touch behind them. There is something of folk-lore poetry, for instance, in the love of Col. Kane, the Arctic explorer for the little spiritualistic cheat, Margaret Fox. It is a pity so much frivolity has been heaped upon it in the telling.

LADY HESTER STANHOPE, by Martin Armstrong (12mo, 180 pages; Representative Women Series, Viking Press: \$2) emerges in the series of biographical studies edited by Francis Birrell; "Representative Women" is the caption—and how strange Lady Hester must feel under that label! As one turns the pages of this compact and racy sketch, one forgets that it is the record of a life which came to a close almost a century ago. Here is a character whose adventures belong to the Sunday supplements, whose impressions should be syndicated. Mr Armstrong has dealt with his subject dramatically and not ungallantly; he has drawn a vivid portrait of an eccentric and fascinating and forceful—if not precisely representative—figure.

ALGER: A Biography without a Hero, by Herbert R. Mayes (illus., 8vo, 241 pages; Macy-Masius: \$3.50). We cannot be sure that "Alger is a name better known than Dickens or Tolstoy or Balzac or Hawthorne" or that an author who "accepted Henry James as a master stylist" had "a mediocre mind" or that hand to mouth, slang to hand writing about a man who was not a "hero" helps a defeated author or present reader. We perceive, moreover, that Horatio Alger's 119 times repeated rhyme of Rough and Ready, Frank and Fearless, Do and Dare, Sink or Swim, by no means rivals in interest the story of his own career, were his "sense of the fine things of life" but conveyed to us seriously, not waggishly and wordishly.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE, by Hugh Walpole (12mo, 205 pages; English Men of Letters Series, Macmillan: \$1.25) weighs the prodigious output of the Victorian novelist on appreciative—not too finely balanced—scales. Mr Walpole is inclined to scoop out criticism by the pound, which is perhaps the most sensible way after all in dealing with a commodity like Trollope. One expects a greater degree of bulk than brilliance. Trollope's novels survive, in Mr Walpole's estimation, chiefly "because there still blows through them a little breath of their author's original excitement," and to that phase of their vitality he pays substantial tribute. That Trollope was "not so much a creative artist as a recording citizen" is just appraisal, and he adds with equal truth that Trollope "is admirably suited to the British taste, being physically so typical a British figure and sentimentally so thorough a British fable."

GEORGE ELIOT'S FAMILY LIFE AND LETTERS, by Arthur Paterson (8vo, 254 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$5). Superficially these very domestic letters of Marian Evans to the sons of G. H. Lewes seem to offer little to any one curious as to the literary personality of George Eliot. The great novels, which were being written in the period covered by the correspondence, are hardly more than mentioned in it. Yet the very absoluteness of the letters in the hearth-side atmosphere perhaps yields views of some significance as to the central literary traits of their writer. At all events the insatiably affectionate interest in her family which George Eliot's correspondence here continually reveals is at least a hint of those gifts of heart which could impart so much vitality and substance to *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*.

**CONDEMNED TO DEVIL'S ISLAND**, by Blair Niles (10mo, 376 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3). The appalling disclosures in this book about the notorious French convict settlement in the tropics are narrated with such quivering intensity that it is hard to believe that such a work will not arouse public indignation and result in some alleviation of this suffering. Mrs Niles' sympathy with the victims of the present cruel system is as controlled as her nervous clairvoyance is penetrating. Out of her experience she has composed a document so revealing of what the human race can inflict on itself, that for a parallel one can only think of Dostoevsky's *House of the Dead*.

**RECENT GAINS IN AMERICAN CIVILIZATION**, edited by a Group of Distinguished Critics of Contemporary Life, with foreword by Kirby Page (10mo, 357 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3) presents the astonishing spectacle of some of the nation's best friends and severest critics in a palliative mood. Having birched the American scene until they are individually and collectively arm-weary, they offer a dose of kindness. Mr Villard tries to smile as he writes about "the bright side" of the American press, and Stuart Chase smothers his sarcasm in an attempted optimism about economics. It is not easy, with two-thirds of all American families still in relative poverty, but at least "the wolf is back of the garage instead of the kitchen door." Most of the contributors to this symposium are, in John Dewey's phrase, "indulging in social apologetics." "When Robinson Crusoe sat down," he says, "to make a debit-credit list of his blessings and his troubles, he did it in order to cheer himself up." A similar intent is discernible here. The inventory has its merits, and can do no harm.

**THE SOUL OF CHINA**, by Richard Wilhelm, translated from the German by J. Holroyd Reece (10mo, 382 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3.75) eloquently depicts the "cultural independence" of the Chinese people, and with no less eloquence pleads their right to be master in their own house, free from "the age-long servility brought about by European arrogance." That China is bound to assume that position, whether or not the alien powers step out graciously, he has no hesitation in predicting, and his conclusions are not the hasty guesses of a politician, but the seasoned judgement of a man who has enjoyed a quarter of a century of intimate contact with Chinese life. Consideration of international questions occupies but a fraction of this volume, however, and the author is equally illuminating in his study of Chinese cities, philosophy, and social customs. It is all told in a prose style of flexibility and colour—qualities which have not been lost in the excellent translation by J. Holroyd Reece. **ORIENTAL AND OCCIDENTAL CULTURE: An Interpretation** by Maurice Parmelee (10mo, 379 pages; Century: \$4) takes in much more territory, and the viewpoint is predominantly sociological, but here likewise is an appraisal of contrasting civilizations which is not content with mere surface variations. The author reduces a great fund of material to graphic order, and the mind is stimulated by his incisive yet considered comment. As a quick survey of the religions and races of the East, it is excellent.



## THE THEATRE

I HAVE seen two Theatre Guild productions; one masterly, the other not above good standard: *WINGS OVER EUROPE* at the Martin Beck and *MAJOR BARBARA* now at the Republic. *MAJOR BARBARA* should be given with a sort of grandeur: it deals with the high topic of man's salvation and it presents people who are pretty big figures in the world—Andrew Undershaft, Lady Britomart Undershaft, and the Salvation Army General, Mrs Bates. And how does the producer set the play? The first act is in Lady Britomart's drawing-room, it should be a very grand place, but it is made like an apartment in 79th Street. The second act is in the Salvation Army Shelter; the scene should suggest misery, no doubt, but it should also suggest blood, fire, and the ecstasy that goes with the drums. This scene is made merely drab. The fourth act which takes place in the Munition Works should show something of the grandeur of Undershaft's great undertaking: we are shown a factory-section with a bright mask on. And the players key themselves to this style of production. Dudley Digges plays a remarkable Andrew Undershaft. But he makes him elderly instead of in vigorous prime; he makes him a professional man instead of a man who has attained to mastery through physical and mental hardihood and adventurousness. Helen Westley did not show us a dominating lady in her Lady Britomart: she had only a little of the readiness, the randomness, the sureness that are the tokens of that particular kind of aristocrat. Altogether the play was in a lower key than the one in which G.B.S. had pitched it. It is not a very good play but it has in it talk of the very best kind, ideas that only a first-rate mind could become possessed of, and extraordinarily well-observed types of character. And above all, it has moments when ideas are passionately presented. It is a symposium in which methods of salvation are discussed: what can we do to save the soul of man? Barbara Undershaft has to choose between casual well-doing with an accompaniment of ecstasy on one hand, and Preparedness and Prosperity on the other. Observe, that authentic religious feeling never gets itself expressed in this symposium. "Lord, why hast thou forsaken me?" is the sentence

that comes into Barbara's mind at the crisis, not "My Kingdom is not of this world." Had Shaw been able to create a character who could have understood that saying, his symposium would have been made immensely richer. The play has a dramatic defect. That lowbrow, Bill Walker, whom Barbara would have won out of mere brutal life if he had not seen Undershaft and Todger buy up salvation and the converted Snobby Price steal his money, is, for all his outward energy, an empty character: the scenes in which he figures with Barbara can have no vibration; these scenes let Barbara down at the very time when she should be rising to her tragic cry. What Winifred Lenihan puts into the part is an enthusiastic soul; what she leaves out is ringing command. "I who have worn a uniform now wear this," she says, but her eyes are melting, not flashing when she says it. Some of the minor parts were finely done: Maurice Wells as Stephen Undershaft was the young man of the English higher schools to the life—in dress, in manner of approaching an idea, in gentlemanly patronage of everything outside himself. The colourless Sara, the Dionysian Greek Professor, and Snobby Price were all well played.

The production of *WINGS OVER EUROPE* was a real theatrical triumph. In this play written by Robert Nichols and Maurice Browne there are no women: with five exceptions, the nineteen men in the cast are members of a British Cabinet Committee, and the scene of the three acts is in the Council Room of the British Prime Minister's house. The production must have been full of problems—how to characterize each man seated around a table, how to give a feeling of suspense with regard to an action so unbelievable as the destruction of the planet. The producer triumphed nobly over his difficulties. Out of the fourteen cabinet ministers seated around a table he made an entity—they were an organism, and by treating them as an organism he obtained his theatrical effects. When they were individualized, they became surprisingly individual. And when the organism broke under the pressure of terror, and member after member took to striding this way and that way about the room, we had something of the effect of the break-up of a world. The production was directed by Rouben Mamoulian and the setting was designed by Raymond Sovey. Sometime, I hope, Rouben Mamoulian will have the



opportunity of putting on a play written entirely in a convention that will permit of his treating the players as an entity. *WINGS OVER EUROPE* was not completely in such a convention. Of course the production could not have been such a triumph had it not been for the distinguished acting of almost everyone in the cast. First of all, there was Alexander Kirkland who played the part of the young physicist, Francis Lightfoot. One wonders what the dramatists' idea of this young man really is. We must believe in his sanity—at least up to a certain point in the play. But when, in order to make the representatives of an empire assent to his proposals, he arranges for the destruction of the world, we have to regard him as insane. But at what point does he become insane? It is not clearly shown to us. Alexander Kirkland, however, gives an astonishing rendering of his part: against the background of conservatism shown by the cabinet he shows us a young man possessed—a Shelley re-born as a physicist. Memorable parts were created by Frank Conroy as Evelyn Arthur, by Ernest Lawford as the Prime Minister, by John Dunn as Lord Sunningdale, by Hugh Buckler as Richard Stapp, the dare-devil War Minister, by Grant Stewart as Sir Romilly Blount, the tough old Admiralty Lord. There was very little reason given for the entrance of two men from the street: but it was good to get Hart-Plimsoll and Taggart on. As played by Wheeler Dryden and Charles Cardon we had two finely contrasted London types. *WINGS OVER EUROPE* is an extraordinarily well-cast play. It has an impetuosity which I imagine is due to Robert Nichols' writing—an impetuosity which in spite of the impossibility, and worse, the improbability, of many of the situations, carries the audience along.

The *MACBETH* directed by Douglas Ross was a notable production, but notable in a different way from the production of *WINGS OVER EUROPE*. The magnificence was in the mounting. Gordon Craig's wonderful designs were taken and used in such a way that they became part of an actual, not an ideal theatre. Gordon Craig's great invention, it seems to me, consists in making the stage more dimensional than it has been—he uses platforms, bridges, stairways in almost every scene of *MACBETH*, and by doing so he gets action on more than one plane. If that were all that Craig's designs helped toward it would be a great deal, but he also

gives a grand setting for Shakespeare's fantasy and poetry. Three or four of the settings were magnificent achievements in themselves: there was the scene where Macbeth with the Weird Sisters stands as in a Cathedral in Inferno; there was the scene where Duncan is received by Lady Macbeth before a castle which seems to be the last, the remotest place to which Duncan can come in his kingdom, and there is the scene in Macbeth's castle where Lady Macbeth, holding a lamp, passes up and down the stairway and across a level—a place of shadows where one sleeping and two waking people seem to move in a vault. And the costumes provided are fine enough to go with so grand an action as that of *MACBETH*. But this play is, first of all, a recital of verse against a background of violent action; the great scenes are all in soliloquy. It is obvious, then, that as much attention should be given to the enunciation of the verse as to the mounting of the scenes. This has not been done. The verse is repeated so that it is heard and understood, and heard and understood as verse, and that is something. But it is not repeated with any real regard for the music of the lines. Lyn Harding, for instance, says his great lines without, apparently, an inner feeling for such music as

"Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow."

He soliloquizes as if the situation had given him the cue—not as if an event had startled him into a sort of clairvoyance that comes out in accents that have been set to a deep music. Florence Reed has this advantage over Lyn Harding: her great scene is in prose, her voice and movement in the sleep-walking scene were deeply mournful. But in the spirited scenes she did not render the woman who through some element of will, intellect, or imagination dominates her husband. The most adequate delivery in the whole play was Percival Vivian's, in the porter's great prose fantasy.

Without many extraneous devices Katherine Cornell manages to give us the impression that she is a woman for whom even a New Yorker of the Age of Innocence would leave wife and relations. The difficulty in Ellen Olenska's case is the problem of why she loves Newland Archer—she loves through him, perhaps, the undepraved, undissipated life which she might have had. And so

her love has tenderness in it and a regard for the unspoiled life which she expects him to live. In the play a political career is hinted at. This is a misunderstanding on the playwright's part; that kind of interest is not needed to bring about Ellen's renunciation. And it is as a generous and tender lover that Katherine Cornell wins our sympathy. The important scene in the play is the fourth. It is a triumph that this fourth scene was so impressive. For consider: Ellen receives a proposal from Julius Beaufort, and almost immediately afterward Newland Archer enters and puts his whole life at her feet. It is astonishing that we can be made forget all our ludicrous thought about an ultra-popular personage. With dignity and femininity she makes herself inaccessible to Beaufort, and then, when Newland Archer shows her that his life with May is at an end, with dignity rising to tragic exultation she takes his love. But this scene would not have been possible without the superb acting of Arnold Korff. There is so much character in his Julius Beaufort, so much of a particular sort of passion, that he brings Ellen into another sort of world, so that when Newland Archer makes his declaration to her there is no sense of repetition. This is a triumph not only for Katherine Cornell, Rollo Peters, and Arnold Korff (especially for Arnold Korff; his speech about the clock-strokes, his sudden aging after Ellen's refusal, are amongst the memorable things I have known in acting) but it is a triumph for the producer. The play was well cast and every part was acted intelligently, and some of the lesser parts were acted finely—notably the part of Mrs Manson Mingott by Katharine Stewart, Sillerton Jackson by William Podmore, and Carlos Saramonte by Edouard La Roche. It is hard to make Newland Archer's a vividly interesting part. But Rollo Peters gave the part such dignity and sometimes such gentleness that we could understand Ellen Olenska's love for him.

PADRAIC COLUM

## MODERN ART

THE American contributors to the winter's art record are, as usual, slow in starting. So far, and it is already Christmas, there have been but Mr Marin and Mr Arno. The Marin standard, if not surpassed, has at least been maintained. But that is saying a great deal. There was one sea-piece certainly fit to be included among "the six best Marins," and at least ten others that were admirably representative of the artist's adult style. That is to say, they were full of the technical fireworks that so impress the other artists and full too of the flashing observations upon nature that excuse the fireworks. Marsden Hartley wrote an enthusiastic commendation for the catalogue of the exhibition, including himself among the number who hold that Marin cannot be excelled as a watercolourist by any of his contemporaries and that to match him at all for depth of feeling and expertness in expressing it one must go back to the old Chinese. At the same time, it must be confessed, that the public at large did not inflame, as you would think it might, at the submitted evidence of so great an artist in our midst. Very little talk of it came my way other than that that concerned itself with the prices and sales; which, I understand, were again record-breaking and satisfactory. One chance that we had to start Mr Marin's reputation abroad, oddly enough, failed. That distinguished winter visitor to these shores, Mr St John Ervine, could not "see" the Marins. That is, he allowed them merit but not super-excellence. He broke this news to Mr Stieglitz himself in a scene that must have been more memorable than Mr Ervine realized at the time. Mr Stieglitz, as you know, is the angel of the Intimate Gallery and the official sponsor of Mr Marin, and like all angels he grieves more over the one sinner that is lost than over the ninety and nine Marsden Hartleys that are saved. Personally I don't think the episode illustrates the obtuseness of Mr St John Ervine so much as it does the difficulty that attends the establishment of any artist's reputation during his lifetime. Marsden Hartley and myself and the other "just" people have become convinced by a long line of superb Marins which we have seen in various shows; and to an extent that could hardly be equalled by any one, how-

ever receptive, who meets these drawings for the first time. The aforesaid best half-dozen Marins nicely installed in a genuine Luxembourg Gallery would correct such a situation if anything could.

Mr Peter Arno, as an illustrator, is not unknown to local fame. Just how soon that giddy and prosperous weekly, *The New Yorker*, began using his services I am not sure, but he now seems so completely *The New Yorker* that very likely he was there at the start. All the text seems to lead up to Mr Arno's drawings and many of the other artists on the staff now seem to do the Arno stuff almost as well as its inventor. All of them, but Mr Arno most so, are admirably in the period, and may be said to make the period. At last—in the current exhibition of the Arno originals in the Valentine Gallery—we seem to know ourselves for what we are. Bootlegging as a profession, how romantic and exhilarating; tabloid headlines, what pep; movie-queens, what irresistible appeal; and ungodliness in general, how truly chic! We simply wallow in sin and don't care a—well, we don't mind it a bit. Sodom and Gomorrah pale in comparison and if the clergy quit their jobs in despair, that is no reason why the artists should lay down their pens and brushes. At any rate they do not do it. . . . No, "admirable" scarcely describes the immediate present, but we know we are interesting pathologically, and if a quieter time ever does arrive in the world's history, you may be sure the staid historians of that future will find us a diverting study—and Mr Arno's drawings will be a complete source of information for them.

He is the Constantin Guys of New York. I do not mean he is an imitator of Guys but a comparable artist. If you take Guys seriously you must take Arno seriously. He has that attribute we constantly look for in American art—"the wicked punch," and he has a wider range than Guys ever dreamed of. Say Guys, and you mean crinolined ladies rolling along in the Bois or those less than demi-mondaine inmates of the brothels; say Arno and you mean everything that is riotous in New York life. He has such amazing ease of draughtsmanship that few people have as yet looked upon it as draughtsmanship; they have been too busy with the witticisms and naughty suggestions in which it is enveloped to realize its qualities as art. The current exhibition of the originals will start, con-

sequently, another kind of reputation for him, for it is impossible to visit it without seeing at once that in Arno we have something quite our own and something strong. What will become of him I can't foretell. It is almost fatal in this country to become known as a wit or even as a genius of any kind. Immediately all the forces combine to slay you. Witness the strange case of Peter Dunne, the lonely death of Arthur B. Davies in the Italian Alps, and the remarkable struggle of Eugene O'Neill in China to obtain the repose that is so difficult upon his native heath. As yet there has been no trace of strain nor bitterness in Arno's work. So far all has been youthful gaiety and everything has been material, but if our young man harbours any ambition for a lengthy career, such as those enjoyed by so many of his famous predecessors in caricature, let him look to it that he protect himself. Being an artist is not so easy as it used to be. There are enemies who lurk behind every corner, not so fearsome, perhaps, as gunmen, but fully as dangerous. They may even at times be editors and the especial *coup de grâce* they administer is that too familiar cry for "more production." However, I had no intention of ending upon a gloomy note. To croak like a raven when a new artist makes a particularly gratifying success is a little too much like the pessimist who always groaned when going down hill because when he got to the bottom he should be obliged to undertake the fearsome climb up another. Instead I meant to urge Mr St John Ervine to try still another American art show; Mr Arno's, in fact. If he gives that up also I shall think him too—British!

HENRY MCBRIDE



## MUSICAL CHRONICLE

IN the new Gershwin piece for orchestra we found artistic economy carried to its farthest limits—to economy of musical excellence. When there is nothing in a composer's aesthetic to make him shun saliency through self-imposed resistances, one can attribute the lack of saliency solely to insufficiencies in inventiveness. In instrumentation, Mr Gershwin was thus confined; rhythmically, his work was lively, but not enterprising. The cheerful themes were cheerful in a not too exacting manner—and the grave dangers of the somewhat more plendant ones were partially obviated by waywardness in orchestral punctuation, Mr Gershwin here hiding his blue light under a peck.

Mr Taylor's clever programme notes, in illuminating the music, also served to make its inadequacies more apparent. The violin episode, for instance, might have got by as a piece of technical expediency, a solo passage introduced for the humble sake of orchestral variety. But when it is labelled as a coquettish voice, speaking suggestively in French, the earnest eavesdropper must find it inexpressive. There was amusing psychology, however, in the emergence of the "back home" theme at this point, detailing the hero's huge melancholy. . . . The piece exemplified frailty qualities which have been regularly meted out to Symphony audiences in intense doses. Thus its enthusiastic reception must have been due to some secret in the approach. An American in Paris was not good modern music watered—it was bad modern music improved. It represented the bringing of considerable thought to the sort of thing that comes up the airshaft. Thus we may find an element of wholesomeness in the recognition which was accorded it.

But if Mr Gershwin was able to stir by the familiar, consider how much greater was the likelihood of Ernest Bloch's appeal with his new "America," an Epic Rhapsody in Three Parts for Orchestra. For the metonymy of the melting pot could here provide a pretext for the musical medley—in the intermingling of childhood memories (Old Hundred, Dixie, Pop Goes the Weasel, et cetera) we incidentally imply the welding of a nation. Consider how long and carefully we had been trained to like Mr Bloch's new piece, how much opportunity there was for the composer to "awaken response" as we heard such tunes more or less coherently through



the plot of his own music, his gradual formation of the anthem which ends the third movement.

"1620." And there spreads out before us, in mysterious calm, a vast unused continent. Perhaps it should have remained so: many hardships are in store for both the nation and its interpreter, but it is not certain which met them more fearlessly. For Mr Bloch's work, had it been written by any one with less power of conviction and less musical expertness, could have been extremely repellent. At some points he comes close to a total reliance upon non-musical ideation—as in his discussion of the Civil War, where the conflicting values of John Brown's Body and Tramp Tramp Tramp the Boys Are Marching could hardly proclaim themselves to a listener uninformed of the relevant historical accidents. And you may depend upon it that the highest notes of the anthem will fall upon the words "high" and "hearts." Indeed, there was so much evidence of "verbal thinking" in the work, and the score seems to have been so dotted with comments and quotations, that we wondered why this aspect of the composer's experience could not have been made integral to the performance. Listening subjectively, collaborating to produce a little concert of our own, we imagined ten loudspeakers thundering above the rage of the instruments: "Material prosperity—Speed—Noise—Man, Slave of the machines." We imagined the metallic voice, now proclaiming dry instructions, mere analytic criticisms of the music, and again becoming declamatory over the episodes from Whitman. At the moment this seemed plausible.

Surely, with so many aspects of national experience involved in the music, Mr Bloch's new piece must have a limited audience of only one hundred million people. Further, its sociology is suspect—and as one metropolitan critic has said destructively concerning Bloch's speeches about freedom, "the abolition of slavery was due exclusively to the rise of machinery, and . . . human bondage will inevitably recur as soon as the earth's store of coal is depleted." It is to be hoped that this statement, rather than Whitman's less accurate zeal, will some day be set to music. But in the meantime, if one enters the concert hall with a willingness to accept the obvious rules of Bloch's piece, he will be repaid by an hour of satisfactory flag-waving under the aegis of much skilful music, and he may even find ways of carrying this patriotism beyond itself.

KENNETH BURKE

## COMMENT

WHEN an artist is willing that the expressiveness of his work be overlooked by any but those who are interested enough to find it, he has freedom in which to realize without interference, conceptions which he personally values. But advertising, the opposite of such intensiveness, has its uses. One recalls Sir Philip Sidney's miniature of Edward Wotton's passion for horses: "no earthly thing bred such wonder to a prince as to be a good horseman; skill of government was but a *pedanteria* in comparison. . . . Then would he add . . . what a peerless beast the horse was . . . that if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse." Although one may not know much about occultism, one feels an involuntary indulgence toward Saunders' Chiromancy when Lilly says, "there is not in any one *Book* or *Volume* yet extant, in any Language of *Europe*, that comprehends so many rarities, so neatly couched, so judiciously Methodized, as are by our *Author* comprized in this his Labour. The *Author* for his pains, the *Book* for its merits, I commend to this unthankful Age." Poetry of this kind persuades in one way if not in another, and makes a friend of the advocate if not of his client. And the miraculous need not be objectionable; for though one might not guess Messrs Foyle's "output of school-books" to be "30 tons a week," one can believe it. Too great strain upon credulity results in inattention, however; when a masterpiece is desired that will "grip and burn like Nessus' magic shirt," we are not inspired to compete; and iteration is wasteful unless a first saying was so alluring that we welcome an encore, as in the announcement of Barnum's "two living whales, two living whales, two living whales."

The semi-confidential impartial enthusiasm of the pre-auction descriptive catalogue suggests a desirable mechanics of eulogy and the same kind of honour without exaggeration is seen occasionally in guide-books and travel bureau advertisements. Though somewhat unguarded and uncompactly eager in comparison with Karl

Baedeker's contagious impassivity, certain handbooks<sup>1</sup> of the University Travel Department of The North German Lloyd comprise pictorially and with characteristic abundance, a little cyclorama of engaging remarkableness—mediaeval carvings and ecclesiastical treasures, luxurious crockery, boilers for the Europa, the domestic interior with the window for the cactuses, the racing Ring at Nürburg, and—by no means incompatible with combustion-chambers and cylinders—Dürer's design of the automatically movable carriage driven at the will of the occupants by a system of cog-wheels. There is mention of the German university with its "complete freedom and strenuous discipline," of the art of the placard, of the Farbenfreude of the book-sellers in exhibiting novels that look like "birds, butterflies, and orchids"; of small towns, of great cities. And if one doesn't like cities, there are the mountains "so lonely, so easily reached."

The desire to see good things is in itself good when not degraded by inquisitiveness or predatoriness, and it is not just to regard as rapacity the advertiser's art of educating visualization.

<sup>1</sup> Art and Germany, edited by Karl Kiessel and Ernst O. Thiele (brochure, 8vo, 111 pages); Passing Through Germany 1928-1929 (brochure, 12mo, 255 pages); The Terramare Office, Wilhelmstrasse 23, Berlin SW 48.

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